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FOUNDATIONS OF  
HISTORY-TEACHING



# FOUNDATIONS OF HISTORY-TEACHING

*A Critique for Teachers*

BY

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THIS little book is the outcome of some attempts extending over a series of years to experiment with the teaching of the preliminaries of 'History' to young children. In the course of these experiments there grew up, on the one hand, a strong sense of the fundamental importance of this early work, and, on the other hand, increasing doubts of the effectiveness of the methods that are still generally adopted. What seemed to be lacking was not so much technical skill in the teacher. That was present, at times, in relatively too great a degree. The lack was rather of any clear-cut conception of what 'History' as a primary school subject ought really to be, of a conception worked out in close and direct touch with the needs of life as they actually are.

Suspicion that this was the case carried the inquiry into regions that are not, as a rule, very minutely explored in manuals of method. The results of the exploration, in the present instance, may not find acceptance among all readers. But the book will have served its purpose if it helps teachers and others to realize that in the teaching of History we have been taking too much for granted, and have been proceeding upon assumptions and prepossessions that ought to be subjected to close critical examination.

If the book has assumed, in places, something of the form and tone of a manifesto, that, I trust, will be pardoned as the outcome of so strong a sense that something like a challenge had to be sounded.

The actual writing has been done in the course of a sea-voyage amid much diversion and some inconvenience. This is not pleaded in extenuation of the obvious deficiencies of the book. But it is at least an excuse for absence of the usual apparatus of references. It is also, possibly, a source of relief to the reader in sparing him some quotations that might otherwise have been thought necessary.

F. CLARKE.

*Off Finisterre,*

*Dec. 31, 1927.*

*Note:* A series of accidents has unavoidably delayed publication. I have thought it well to take advantage of the delay to interpolate a chapter on 'War, Dominion and Trusteeship', by way of illustration, in a sufficiently momentous field, of the leading idea of the little book.

The other chapters remain as they were written.

*Capetown,*

*June 1929.*

F. C.

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## I

### LITTLE ARTHUR OF TO-DAY

THE reference to Lady Callcott's much-reprinted masterpiece is intended as an admission of discipleship in one vital particular at least. She wrote for a very definitely conceived human boy<sup>1</sup>—Little Arthur as she knew him. The relation is that of mother and son rather than of teacher and pupil. She is anxious that he should know the story of her England as she understood it; that it should become *his* England also in the same sense; that he should share her loves and prejudices in regard to it. So it is Arthur, *her* Arthur, that fills the centre of the picture. There is no school, no syllabus, no professional teacher, no examination; only an affectionate woman telling a well-loved story to a child whom she loves and wishes to mould.

In teaching to young children what, for want of a better name, we have to call 'History', no other standpoint is possible if our teaching is to have any better result than just the communication of half-understood formulae. Little Arthur must still occupy the centre of the picture though there are millions of him now and though, maybe, his name is heard as Li'l Awfer. So multiple is he that it is not possible to individualize him as completely as Lady Callcott did his prototype. But some attempt must be made if we are to understand the first elements of the problem of teaching him 'History'.

<sup>1</sup> Of course, *mutatis mutandis*, 'boy' must be taken as meaning 'girl' also. The future of English citizenship demands at least that.

It is the purpose of this introductory chapter to make such an attempt.

Clearly Little Arthur to-day will be very different, both in himself and in the view that is taken of him, from the little gentleman in velveteen that we can see in Lady Callcott's pages. What, for instance, would Li'l Awfer (still more his father!) think of this?

'The nobles of England are useful to the country. As they are rich enough to live without working for themselves and their families, they have time to be always ready when the King wants advice; or, when there is a parliament, to make laws; or when the King wishes to send messages to other Kings. And as their forefathers were made noble because of their goodness, wisdom, or bravery, they have, in general, followed their example, and they have always, next after the King, been the people we have loved best, and who have done us the most good.'

Clearly we cannot talk like that to our Little Arthur to-day, the reason being not, as we sometimes imagine, that we are now enlightened and free from such snobbish prejudices, but that we have prejudices of our own for Little Arthur to share.

As we shall see, the conception of a purely objective Past, coldly scientific and unchangeable in its stark and fixed reality, will have to be largely given up in teaching 'History' to children. True, we have to be loyal to the facts as we know them. But there is much virtue in that 'as we know them', and if we are honest with ourselves we shall admit that our main concern is to suggest to Little Arthur certain *interpretations* of the facts. For, at least for children, History is concerned with no Past

that is not a *Living* Past, and in so far as it is living it must be penetrated by the heats and passions and prejudices of the present. Little Arthur is going to be a man, living and playing his part in a world where, inevitably, certain interpretations of human history in general and of his own national history in particular will always play a decisive part. What we do when we teach him 'History', if it is worth doing at all, is to arouse in him the first suggestions of a philosophy of life, the beginnings of a determinate outlook on things that we trust will prove a serviceable guide to a happy and helpful existence. Christianity itself is an interpretation of history. The early chapters of Genesis are an interpretation of history, and any 'philosophy' that children are able to grasp must take the same form. One does not need much acquaintance with children to realize that their little philosophizings always take the form of Whence? and Whither? Experience with them assumes the historic form quite naturally, and Croce could have found further support for his doctrine of the identity of History with Philosophy in an examination of the form into which children spontaneously throw their living experience.

It is with *interpretation*, then, that we are concerned. As the life to be lived is that of Little Arthur, our interpretation will depend upon the view we take of him and of his needs in the world that is to be.

The writer is not equal to the task of achieving a clear portrait-sketch of the multiform Little Arthur with whom we are here concerned. It may be more profitable to point out some of the distinguishing features of

the world in which Little Arthur's early experiences will be gained, especially those features which are likely to increase in prominence and importance as he grows up towards manhood. By 'world' here we must be taken to mean that Western Civilization which, thanks to applied science and the United States, has now come to possess an almost monotonously common character.

In the first place we notice, for Little Arthur's sake, that it is a world where Change is more rapid than ever before, and where the Present becomes Past very quickly. It is a world that has largely cast off the old fears and inhibitions which once hindered experiment in new ways of thought and life and action. Religion, sex-relations, family life, as well as business and war and politics, have all been invaded by the experimental spirit. So it is a world where life makes greater demands on capacity for adaptive thinking. Similarly, social origin, in spite of all appearances, counts for less, and 'character' for more.

Economic forces, too, have done their work, and Little Arthur's real 'neighbours', that is, those with whose actions his own interests are most intimately bound up, may now be living thousands of miles away. If his father is an unemployed Welsh miner or a Lancashire spinner, it should not be difficult to make Arthur understand this. It may be a little more difficult to make Arthur's teacher understand that some little knowledge of the history of India or of the United States of America may be of far more use and significance to him than many highly patriotic details of the medieval history of England. But, for the moment, let



us confine ourselves to Arthur's case, leaving that of his teacher to a later stage.

He lives in a large town. Very little that his home uses is made in the home. Machines surround him on all sides. 'Learning' belongs to school and Arthur does not feel himself being 'educated' when he helps the motor-mechanic or makes friends with the bus-driver. On the other hand, he knows that what he learns at school has its uses, but he finds those uses more obvious in the demands of the school itself than in the demands of life at large as he lives it in house and school and playground. He will learn some 'History' and may even find it interesting. But so far as its subject-matter is alive at all for him it lives not in his flesh-and-blood world of daily boyish experience, but either in a half-fairy world of far away and long ago, or in the book-world of school. Recently we had occasion to ask a Bermondsey boy if he had ever heard of Cecil Rhodes. He answered readily enough: 'Oh yes! Standard VI!' Somewhat similar is the case of the girl who was asked if she had ever wondered what Alexander the Great looked like, and replied that she had always thought of him as one of those historical characters!

School, then, though it means much for Arthur—certainly more than it did—still means less than most of us self-flatterers imagine.

Father is a wage- or salary-earner and Arthur may be counted fortunate if, before his school-days are over, he has had no experience of the precariousness of the feeding-tube which links up the family life with the economic resources of the community. He will soon

learn something of money and its uses, and what the lack of it means. He may even learn something of ways of getting hold of it without hard work. The actual sources of the family supplies, both consumable goods and of the money that buys them, will be more obscure to him, if indeed he is interested at all. Father goes to 'work' and brings home money, and mother buys food and clothes. From odd scraps of conversation and his own occasional questionings he may learn just a little of father's job. Happy is he, if father's job is one in which a little boy can feel he has a share, but this happens seldom nowadays.

Geography lessons may teach him a little of the sources of food and clothes, but in his daily life he will not feel any concern to trace them back any farther than the shop. Why should he? It needed the dislocating cataclysm of a great war to force even the grown-ups, in the mass, to take any interest in such questions.

From father's talk he may pick up a little crude information about personalities and questions of public life. From the newspapers, as he gets older, he picks up far more readily a good deal of valued information about the things that are really interesting—football, prize-fighters, film-stars, perhaps some details of the new Ford car, some typical police-court stories, Channel swims, aeroplane flights, and so on. To such things the 'pictures' serve to impart an insidious glow of romance and knight-errantry, as the minstrelsy of a former age did to its own contemporary happenings.

Arthur's world, though far more chaotic and inexplicable to him than the world of a fifteenth-century

Arthur would have been, is yet interesting enough and, if anything, too rich rather than lacking in stimulus. It cries out for organization and interpretation. The function of his early 'History' teaching, more than that of any other subject, is to set going that salutary process.

How such teaching may do so we shall discuss later. At this point it may be convenient to illustrate the confusion and discordancy of Arthur's normal uninterpreted world by emphasizing certain paradoxes which characterize this modern Western world into which he has been born.

Chief among them, perhaps, is the fact that the right of the common man to a share in the control of human affairs has been established just at the time when that control has become supremely difficult as a result of the technical progress of the past century. Arthur will grow up to find himself with a vote, the use of which does not seem to make very much difference. The control of human affairs, his own included, still seems to remain in much the same place, and the place itself is veiled in obscurity for him.

Baffled impotence may then take the form of wild kicks like a General Strike, and, usually, the kicks will be misdirected. It is just because of this obscurity and the calamities that may follow from the resentment of it by millions of baffled Arthurs that Arthur's History teaching, from the earliest stages, must aim consistently and persistently at interpretation and elucidation. For in History, if anywhere, he will find the clue to the enigma.

A second paradox is to be traced in the simultaneous widening and narrowing of the circle of experience into which Little Arthurs are born. To-day the circle is infinitely wider in respect of range of communication, of scope for material achievement, of possible acquaintance with great and controllable physical forces, and of sheer information about men and things. It is narrower in respect of direct contact with Nature, of variety of *creative* experiences, and especially of that rounded unity of forms of simple skill, like the agricultural and domestic arts, which in a former age covered adequately, if sparingly, all the essentials of life. We know of no better illustration of this concurrent widening and narrowing of the range of life (and therefore of incidental training for the children) than the changing life of the South African native to-day. As he comes more and more into the towns to take a share in the economic system of the white man he learns the white man's ways, buys the white man's utilities, and lives a life which materially we have to call better. At the same time tribal arts are forgotten and wages now provide the supplies which once were the product of diversified primitive craftsmanship. A semi-civilized labourer with boots and the entrée to a cinema has supplanted a barbarian craftsman. Here again, it is the function of History teaching to elucidate and explain.

A third paradox is to be found in the coincidence of increasing security with increasing precariousness. Physical life is more secure: economic and even social status tend to become more precarious as the forces

which control them withdraw to ever more remote centres. England, more than any other country to-day, illustrates the phenomenon. No people are more exposed to the effect of shocks in any part of the world's economic system. Hence the area of control must continue to extend far beyond the geographical limits of the country itself, and to have a population untaught that so it must be, is to invite calamity. Once more it should be through History teaching, at some stage or other, that the necessary light is shed.

In a similar connexion we might also mention what may be called the paradox of Nearness, for it is closely concerned with the idea of Neighbourliness, about which we shall have something to say presently. The economic evolution of the world is taking such a form, and specialization has reached such a pitch, that to-day our 'neighbours' may live at the other side of the world. For if a man's neighbours are those who buy his goods or services or from whom he buys, or if they are those who share with him the ups and downs of a common interest, then the Chinese may be Lancashire's neighbours and the neighbours of South Wales may be miners in Poland. If nationality and nationalism, based largely upon a neighbourliness of locality, are to pass away, may not their place be taken by organization upon a basis of interest, neighbourliness of another kind? Both Geneva and Moscow may be dim portents of such a future.

It may be that in a many-sided development of this idea of neighbourliness—a kind of hierarchy of neighbourhoods—we shall find the clue to much that

perplexes us to-day in the effort to define a satisfying aim for our History teaching.

Somehow, we feel, it is the ability to feel oneself fully *human* that we strive to achieve in ourselves and to produce in our pupils. Patriotism is not enough, and shallow emotionalisms of any sort are not enough. The notion of Humanity has to be integrated, filled with content, clothed with the flesh and blood of living knowledge, as well as suffused with generous emotion. Enthusiasm for one's kind has always been the motive force of such teaching of History as has ever moved men, and so it must remain. Only the notion of 'kind' demands now a wider application and a richer and more varied content.

As Lord Morley has put it: 'True History is the art of *rapprochement* (French for neighbourliness!): bridging distances of time and circumstance.' Or, put even more shortly by Rabindranath Tagore: 'There is only one history, the history of man.'

So Arthur's world is a world of rapid and bewildering and paradoxical *change*, which, somehow or other, he must be taught to understand. Yet it is not without elements of permanence. One is to be found in the common human effort of all peoples in all ages, that great 'neighbourhood' of Time and Earth wherein lie the roots not only of Arthur's confused generation but of his own perplexing life. We shall see in the sequel how Arthur's History teaching may bring to him the security and confidence which are derived from a sense of the great Permanence out of which he has sprung and to which he belongs.

The other element of permanence is Arthur himself—the ever-recurrent human boy. Many things are said of him nowadays in learned books on education and teaching which are almost ludicrously untrue. Some of these we may have to discuss. The one trait we may now emphasize as indubitably shared by him with all other Arthurs of any time and place is a keen and zestful interest in his own present life. His equally real interest in a fanciful world of fairies and in wild stories of distant adventures in strange lands, has been sadly misconstrued, and interpreted as though the lust of life in him was always straining away from the things and experiences of his present world. Such a fundamental misunderstanding of Little Arthur has worked endless havoc in the attempt to teach him History. We shall see how later.

But there are some elementary misunderstandings about the nature of Knowledge itself which are rife among teachers, and as History is one of the forms of Knowledge these misunderstandings must first be cleared away.

## II

### KNOWLEDGE

OF History as a study it may be said that it can be learned only by the grown-up, and can be taught only by those who have reached or passed middle age. To have had adult experience and to have reflected upon it: in other words, to have a 'philosophy', is of the essence of the matter. Hence it will be well to admit at once that real History cannot be taught in school at all. Acceptance of that simple truth would clear away at one stroke much ancient confusion. We are not denying, of course, that something very important and enormously valuable may be taught in school under the name 'History'. Indeed, it is the whole purpose of this book to inquire what that something is and how it may best be taught to pupils up to the age of twelve or thereabouts. But we do wrong if we imagine ourselves to be teaching the real thing.

The cause of the delusion is to be found in a confusion of History with the history book, a confusion that is, perhaps, natural in such a subject. Two factors at work to-day tend to fix the delusion. One is the great spread of 'education' in the sense of book-study, so that History becomes more than ever something that we *read*, and that we feel we 'know' just because we have read. The other factor is a more negative one, due to the vast size and complexity of modern communities. The ordinary individual, especially in an old country, is less likely to feel that he is actually



*making* history. It is one of the advantages of life in a new and undeveloped country, where most of the work is still to do, that the ordinary man can and does actually feel himself to be a builder. He sees an institution or a system come into existence and work, of which he can say, 'I had a share in that.'

One might put the point paradoxically by saying that the reality of History is most intensely felt in those countries where the bulk of it is still in the future!

There is no better way of realizing the inherent difficulty of teaching History than to compare our knowledge of contemporary events with the account we give of analogous events in teaching 'History'. Take, for example, the story of the settlement of Europe in 1814 and 1815 after the Napoleonic Wars. How glib and facile the handling of it all can be with a class, just because it is all so neatly and concisely set out in the book! Yet any teacher who had conscientiously tried to follow the main lines of European events in his own times from the close of the Great War, would surely feel some qualms in leading boys to imagine that they 'understood' the history of 1814 and 1815 because they had mastered what stood in the book.

At the root of the confusion lies a false and uncritical theory of knowledge, and the sure sign of its presence is a disposition to take words for things and formulae for realities.

Analysis of an actual example may be the best means of indicating what is meant.

Here is one from a South African pupil which clearly reveals the absence of any knowledge of History on

the one hand, and the presence of a chaotic medley of verbal labels on the other hand.

'The Invincible Armada was a Dutch ship which entered Table Bay in 1751. A crowd of Hottentots rushed and attacked it, and Vasco da Gama, who was on board, was killed.'

The teacher who released that for publication must have thought it funny. But how does a boy's mind ever get into such a mess, unless by the bedevilment of words of which he has to make something or other? Naturally he makes what he can of it, and we shall find evidence in the chaos of a groping rationality, though confused and involved as an Oriental drawing.

Evidently the detonator that let loose confusion was the idea of *ships*. So far the teacher's cue—'Invincible Armada'—touches the right mental region. But then ships have always had to do with stories of Table Bay for this boy (see what Local History can do!), and if the ship comes in 'History' you can lay odds on its being a Dutch ship. Moreover, in 'History', ships in Table Bay were concerned with fights or the book would not mention them. And we know that the 'Armada' idea has something or other to do with fighting. Then, apparently, comes a vague idea of some Portuguese or other, not clearly identified even as Portuguese, but possibly suggested by some slight prick of a sense that the Armada had to do with Spain. So in comes the Portuguese Vasco da Gama, near enough to a Spaniard, and the *Dutch* ship is overlooked. Table Bay is sufficient cover for that. (The haunting reminiscence is really of the Portuguese leader, D'Almeida, who

actually was killed by Hottentots on the shore of Table Bay in 1510. The date 1751 is probably again due to Dutch ships and Table Bay. It is apparently thought of as the date of certain heroic rescues of shipwrecked sailors in Table Bay by a Hendrik Woltemade whose name still survives locally and in the history-books.)

Both the confusion and the twisted logic that can yet be traced in it should be full of illumination on the point we are discussing. Clearly this sort of thing is not 'knowledge'. Even if the 'facts' were more 'right' than they are it might still not be knowledge. It is as though we have a series of mental cards each with its word or formula. A call for arrangement is made and the pupil guides himself by the superficial analogies and associations that are best established and most obvious to him.

The same thing can be seen in another South African example:

'Van Riebeeck (the founder of the Cape) landed on his statue in Cape Town in 1066.'

We may discount the alleged miraculous precision of Van Riebeeck's arrival by remembering that the boy had probably been told of the landing of Van Riebeeck at the point where his statue now stands (but even this confusion is illuminating). The real force of the example lies in the occurrence of that date 1066. Does any teacher need more than one guess to discover how it came there? But what a light it sheds on the theory of knowledge on which our early History teaching appears to proceed! See how the cards come together again! Somebody landed out of a ship and took possession, and the 1066 card at once turns up. It might have

been the 55 B.C. card had the boy used a different book or had a different teacher.

That South Africa is any worse than England in this regard we doubt very much after reading a recent report by the Board of Education inspectors on the teaching of History in London elementary schools. The picture we have in both cases is one of children's minds strewn with the débris of a card-catalogue, which they piece together painfully in most unhappy families. It is, indeed, a poor game, and the last thing we have any right to do is to laugh at the results of our own mischief.

If the disordered cards remained *mere* cards we should carry, as teachers, a lighter load of sin. But the things come to life, as everything in a child's mind will come to life, in however monstrous and shapeless a fashion. Often enough they take shape as mental Hottentots ready to assail with murderous onslaught any civilized D'Almeida of an idea that tries to insinuate itself into their territory. Or they are like the playing cards in *Alice in Wonderland* which became so uncannily alive and so menacing:

'Hold your tongue!' said the Queen, turning purple.

'I won't!' said Alice.

'Off with her head!' the Queen shouted at the top of her voice. Nobody moved.

'Who cares for *you*?' said Alice (she had grown to her full size by this time). 'You're nothing but a pack of cards!'

At this the whole pack rose up into the air, and came flying down upon her; she gave a little scream, half of fright and half of anger and tried to beat them off, and found herself lying on the bank with her head in the lap of her sister who

was gently brushing away some dead leaves which had fluttered down from the trees upon her face.

When *Alice in Wonderland* becomes a canonical book that passage may well receive allegorical interpretation as a reference to the History teaching of those times. Actually Lewis Carroll's satire of school is often much too direct to be mere appearance.

The purpose of these examples has been to suggest that the wild chaos they reveal is no accident but a direct result of the mistaken theory of knowledge on which so much of our teaching of History (and of some other subjects too) is content to proceed. Put quite simply, it is a theory which treats knowledge as a *possession* instead of as an *activity*.

Let us suppose now two persons *A* and *B*, each of whom comes across a piece of friable white substance. *A* reacts by saying 'Chalk', *B* by taking up the substance and writing with it. Each has responded by a specific 'pattern' of behaviour which he intends to be significant. That is, it completes a sort of circuit of which the perception of the white friable substance was the start. If we now ask, which of the two reactions was the more satisfying and which revealed more true *knowledge* we shall have to say that the answer depends on circumstances. The real point to note is that both responses are *forms of behaviour*. Now in certain contexts *B*'s form of response involves greater 'utility' (as the economist would say), is more helpful to the course of experience, and meets a greater variety of situations than *A*'s. The cases where it is urgently necessary to know the right names of things may

be less numerous and serious than those where it is urgently necessary to know the right use of them. Even to 'know' the name is a form of control, a means of directing behaviour towards the thing. But it is not so generally and so widely useful as other acquired forms of behaviour towards the thing. It is one of the disservices of school that it has tended to identify 'knowledge' of a thing with ability to describe it in words. Such ability *is* a form of knowledge—being a learned mode of behaviour towards a situation. But it is a form of knowledge which has less of real value than we academic persons are disposed to ascribe to it, much as we may succeed in bewitching the 'uneducated' to accept our valuations.

What we call a school 'subject' is, therefore, from this point of view just a whole wide scheme of responses to situations of a certain kind. Thus Arithmetic is a scheme of behaviour in face of situations involving quantity; *real* situations that is, not the unrealities that still figure in so-called examples. Geography is a scheme of behaviour in the face of certain 'natural' and economic situations. It enables us to say, for instance, 'Bread will be dear,' when we hear of failure of the American wheat-crop, just as it should enable us (and often does not) to know why the constellation of the Great Bear looks upside down when viewed from near the equator.

What then of History? If knowledge is to be thought of as a scheme of functionings, of modes of behaviour developing in us by thought and experience and training; if, that is, a 'subject' is really a set of habits, what

is the class or character of modes of behaviour that we indicate by the word 'History' ? In other words, what ought History to *do* to you when you are taught it ? Some drugs make you sick, others make you kick, others put you to sleep. What ought History teaching to do to you ? -

We shall attempt to give an answer later, contenting ourselves here with the formulation of the question in what we believe is the only form that can lead to sound teaching. *Abeunt studia in mores*: History, if it lives at all as a school subject, is a way of life. It may be regarded as a valuable form of 'skill', for it means the presence of powers of response that are needed for fullness of life. Where we go wrong is in taking a verbal response to a verbal situation as being anything more than a substitute. Much that passes for 'History' (passes even in examinations), is on the same mental level as the practice of the witch-doctor who makes an effigy of his enemy and sticks pins into it to cause the enemy hurt.

We may conclude this rather tearful and possibly discursive chapter by two more somewhat melancholy reflections.

One is to contemplate the result of such an experiment as this: To take say, half-a-dozen boys at random, who had left school at least four years previously, and to inquire how far the various school 'subjects' were still alive in them as working forms of behaviour. Something of the kind was done during the war, with most chastening results.

We should find, I imagine, some Arithmetic still working (though no shop-assistant would have any use

for 'compound subtraction'); differing amounts of Geography according largely to the after-school interests of the individual; some Composition, though much would have gone; not much Grammar; perhaps some of the Drawing and Woodwork. But where would the 'History' be? In what form would it be living and operative in the boy or girl of eighteen? One has only to ask the question to realize at once how difficult the task is and how great our failure has been hitherto. It is a poor answer to point to a surviving interest in historical novels or even in historical remains and in historical reading in a few cases. Not only are these few but they do not cover the real and essential scheme of behaviour with which History teaching is properly concerned. That scheme is, in a word, Citizenship.

We both confess the failure and show that we misunderstand the nature of it, when we propose to teach a subject called Civics. In a similar way, because our general course of instruction has failed to moralize our pupils, we turn to a supposed concentrated essence which we call Moral Instruction.

To turn to Civics because we have failed to get the proper results of History teaching is like feeding a patient on pure vitamins after we have ruined his digestive and assimilative powers by feeding him stodge. The true remedy is a reform of the whole regimen. There is nothing to be said against Civics until it is made a 'Subject'. It then figures as the misbegotten fruit of a whole disordered growth; for, as such, it affords a piquant example of the self-defeating effort which aims at producing forms of behaviour by com-



municating a descriptive account of their conditions. 'Civics' as a subject, recognizes fully enough that the establishment of a certain scheme of behaviour is the object in view. But what it does in effect, is to substitute quite another scheme of behaviour as its standard in teaching, behaviour with words and descriptions and definitions. To test 'Civics' by a written examination is to put the crown on absurdity. A real examination in Civics is a severe ordeal. The initiatory and disciplinary ceremonies of Sparta occur to one as an instance.

The truth is that there should be no such 'subject' in any curriculum that is brought to bear effectively in the actual media of life and experience. There is, indeed, a sense in which Civics has no more immediate connexion with History than with any other subject. There is at least as much civic value in knowing how to care for the feeding and health of a baby, or in being able to express oneself clearly and precisely in the mother tongue, as there is in knowing the exact procedure by which a Bill becomes an Act of Parliament.

Yet there *is*, of course, a special relation between History and the technique of citizenship, and the proper place of Civics in any specialized sense is as part and parcel of the History course. For the concern of History, we cannot too often repeat, is with the common human effort. The long millenia of common striving and travail, often with conflict and many false turnings, have taught us slowly and painfully, though imperfectly, the ways in which the general effort can be made most fruitful, and the conditions which must be fulfilled if the effort is not to end in defeat. These

forms and conditions are not to be understood, certainly not by children, through any process of abstract or analytic study. They must be known concretely and genetically, in their place and upspringing in the whole growth of civilized structure. The true Civics consists in tracing them out from the first struggle of men in common out of animalism, with the first great achievement of language, through all the ages of pre-history, through Egypt and Babylon, Greece and Rome, down to the League of Nations and to the vast economic machine which mankind at large has fashioned to serve the needs of life to-day. If this is done the deeper springs of emotion can be touched, where lie the sources of sustenance of every life of sustained and consistent citizen-behaviour. It must be difficult for even a normally intelligent child to read such a book as Van Loon's *Story of Mankind* without catching something of this almost religious enthusiasm. He can get it even from the history of his own people, provided the standpoint is always that of his people's contribution to the common effort. The teacher who has, on his part, captured such a spirit will feel no need for a syllabus of Civics. He will have found a much surer road to the determination of citizen behaviour in the future.

As for details of technique like the methods of a Town Council, or the procedure of Parliament, they will be handled where they happen to be wanted in the History course or not at all. So far as a scheme of citizen behaviour is concerned they represent a lower order of knowledge which has little to do with the standards and ideals and enthusiasms with which

History is concerned. They are comparable to the consultation of a railway time-table by one who takes a journey, and have no intrinsic importance of their own. To teach formal 'Civics' systematically is, in fact, much like teaching a time-table.

Always, then, the enemy is the same:

That frost of fact by which our wisdom gives  
Correctly stated death to all that lives.

Civics is a supreme example of such fatality. But History teaching generally suffers from the killing frost. Every syllabus tends to become a frozen prison. Indeed, as we shall have cause to realize, that endemic disease of all school-teaching which we may call *syllabitis*, is one to which the teaching of History is peculiarly prone.

### III

## HISTORY

THE argument of the preceding chapter makes it all the more necessary that we should endeavour now to define more precisely the conception of 'History' from which this study proceeds. No final or completely satisfactory definition can be possible, if only for the reason that the conception of History is itself part of History and therefore subject to the law of historic change. Each age will define it over again in the light of its own purposes, and from the standpoint of its own experiences and interests. It is the teacher's business not to invent new definitions of his own, still less to acquiesce in ready-made notions that he does not himself analyse, but rather to make articulate to himself and operative in his teaching, that conception which is actually implicit in the working world to-day. The notion of 'subjects' as quite immutable 'bodies of knowledge' is one of the effects of the disease of *syllabitis* to which we have already referred.

We may suspect that much ineffectiveness and want of vital stimulus in teaching spring from the habit of treating subject-matter as something *given* once for all, the same for all alike, so that what we are concerned with in practice is mainly Method. The idea has had special encouragement in England where for so long it was thought by authority that the elementary teacher had to be trained to teach rather than be educated. So

it was only by lucky accident that any elementary teacher ever *felt* his subject, as a life, a functioning, a stirring within himself. He was seldom able to achieve education enough to carry him to that point. Prescription of curricula and years of official examination served to ingrain deeply in him the habit of regarding knowledge as something purely objective, immutable and formulated once for all. If you wanted it, there it was prescribed in the syllabus and set forth in the book, just as the Necessary Institution of a Christian Man was formulated once for all in the Church Catechism.

Such a habit of mind—by no means confined to elementary school-teachers—is itself an archaism. But it is still strongly potent in that preoccupation with ‘Method’ and devices and tricks of procedure, with which the skilled technician among teachers is disposed to eke out inadequacy of knowledge. Much plausible and even efficient-looking futility arises from this source.

One effect of a new and better régime, where it is no longer thought improper that any teacher should be well educated, even if he is also trained, will be a turning from the comparative trivialities of ‘Method’ as once understood, to study more profoundly and imaginatively the subject that is to be taught. In the case of Arithmetic, for instance, where Method has so often run rampant, a more critical and rational conception of what the ‘subject’ itself really is would do away at once with most of the sheer lumber that an old tradition of Method helps to perpetuate.

The same is equally true of History, only here the

tyranny of the book is added to the burden of traditional Method.

Yet it is doubtful whether many teachers of children up to the age of twelve or thereabouts could give any very coherent or intelligible account of what they take the 'History' that they teach to mean. Some would be frank and admit that they had given no thought to the matter. They had worked out a syllabus and they had found such and such books helpful.

Others might say a few pleasant words about patriotism and moral training, though many would admit that pupils found History dull and, occasionally, that they themselves found it dull also.

In practice a certain amount of lip-service is paid to a good many conceptions. For some reason the biographical (or Carlylean) conception of history as the record of great men is often popular among teachers, few of whom realize how thoroughly *aristocratic* such a conception is, whatever may be the value of such a conception in the conditions of to-day.

To others History is just a pageant, a series of romanticized pictures having no essential or vital connexion with us of to-day and our everyday life. Paradoxically enough, the error of such a conception is that it places History entirely in the *past*, in the land of the dead and gone, and the study of History then becomes no better than a more or less pleasurable process of contemplation. An old country like England is peculiarly prone to this sort of thing. It allies itself readily on the one hand with Sentimentalism, and on the other with Antiquarianism. Both are increasingly traceable

to-day in the English attitude to the past. The rich past is *viewed* (not lived in) as a lovely autumn landscape, spread out before us indeed, but in no real sense operative in us as the very stuff of which we are made.

More vital is the conception of History as a drama, and a good teacher can effect much valuable education by the application of it. But here again History still remains a spectacle to be observed, and while we learn from it much about the motives and interaction of men, we learn precious little—less than we often imagine—about the real course of History. Most of all, how far does a pupil understand that he is actor even more than spectator? Great shining figures fill the stage with crowds of undifferentiated supers (the ‘people’) in the background. What part or lot has he in it all? What difference have, say, Julius Caesar or the French Revolution made to him? He leaves the theatre of the history-lesson, the actors withdraw, he goes one way, and the ‘drama’ goes another.

It is questionable whether such good as ‘dramatic’ history can do in education would not be done more effectively by drama that was frankly literary like *Macbeth* or *Hamlet*. Dramatic effects may be the more easily achieved when adhesion to literal historic truth is not demanded.

At the same time the pupil is not likely to form any lively conception of History as something that directly involves *him*, as a continuous course of common effort—often least dramatic and most humdrum just when it was most fruitful—in which he himself is now to bear his part. Once you feel yourself to be really involved in

the common effort, a strong sense of its dramatic quality may well be more of a hindrance than a help. From it one would expect the *poseur* and the untrustworthy shirker, rather than the trusty citizen.

Of History simply as a *story* we shall have something to say later (Chapter IX).

Let us now hazard the attempt which has to be made if we are to vitalize in any degree the early teaching of History. As we have already noted, the teacher is not really free to choose for himself the conception of History with which he will work. He is to train Arthur in a life which is already being lived. As educator he is the guarantor of social continuity, and of the preparedness of the next generation for the world that is to be. 'History' for him will tend to be History as his own age and generation are coming to understand it. Unless he makes clear to himself what that understanding is, his teaching may be doomed to unreality and futility, just as so much religious teaching has failed through taking no account of religion as the people understood it. Independently of all the books and records the moving thought and life of Western peoples are to-day animated by a conception of History that is, in many ways, a radically new thing, determining the tone and spirit of the history-books, rather than determined by them. Explicitly or not, mankind takes some attitude or other towards its past, sometimes of vain regret, sometimes of shame, sometimes of pride, sometimes of indifference or even dislike. In the attitude that is taken nowadays there is something that seems strikingly new. Former ages have almost invariably thought of human



life and the universe as dominated by a *Plan*. To-day we think less of *Plan* and more of *Process*. That seems to be the essence of the change, a change that is still going on and likely to affect more and more profoundly every department of life. The thought of men in former days aimed at discovering the ground plan on which things were built, and organized human life was conceived as governed by a plan in the same sense. Plato's *Republic*, for instance, is a sustained effort to discover such a ground plan of human life and to give it expression in the form of a working model of the building. The Roman Empire with its great creation of Roman Law is a vast illustration of such a plan in practice. Christianity itself was a plan, Papacy and Empire in the Middle Ages represented a plan. Thinkers of the eighteenth century worked industriously at the framing of a new plan grounded in Reason, and the French Revolution was an attempt to erect the building. Jeremy Bentham again, with his Greatest Happiness principle, is one more of many possible instances of those who looked at life and its problems from the standpoint of the architect.

Naturally, when the organization of human life, and even the whole quality of the universe, were thought of in this way, the framing of *patterns* was the form that social philosophy generally took. Hence the countless Utopias, mostly on paper, which issued from such a mode of thought. Only here and there could be found a man like Burke or Adam Smith who showed signs of a doubt that there might be any Plan at all in the sense of a pre-ordained scheme. Might not Life itself be

greater than any scheme into which we could fit it, so that the Plan, if any, revealed itself progressively in a continuous growth? School-keeping, knowledge-mongering man seems as though he must always have his syllabus, and he must always think of his syllabus as existing prior to any activity along the lines of it.

Now comes a time when we look at things more like the shrewd professor who when asked to submit a syllabus for the year's work in his subject replied that he would not properly know what his syllabus was (i.e. proved to be) until the end of the year! Just so we are increasingly shy in our thought about life and the universe to-day to lay down a syllabus and to say 'Thus and thus it shall necessarily be'. We say rather that we are still finding out what may come to be, and we find it out not by exploration in the fields of pure Reason, but by tracing back and back the *growth* of things. The establishment of the facts of the enormous duration of geological time; the pushing back of the origins of man a distance of years that runs into hundreds of thousands; the discovery that civilization itself is far older than we thought it was; the gradual—very gradual—forging of the links that form the long and ever-lengthening chain of biological evolution; the growth of bacteriology and micro-biology revealing forms of life so minute and lowly as to suggest a hope of finding the point where life as such begins; such developments of thought as these through the past century have profoundly influenced our notions of man's place and destiny in creation. Surely the teaching of the mass of the population at just the age when it is

keen to know the general nature and origins of things should show some consciousness of so profound a change. If it fails to do so it is but training a generation to disbelief in what it is formally taught.

We may sum up the preceding discussion by saying that the idea of History—of growth and change and evolution and endless fruitfulness in new forms—provides the mould into which all our thinking tends to fall to-day. How should we treat in these days men like some of the Utilitarians who claimed that they had discovered the true Plan of life and recommended us to clear the site and start again? Something like it seems to have been attempted in Russia. Perhaps Bolshevism, so far from being revolutionary, is a dying effort of the 'Plan' school of thought, in a world that no longer believes that the life of man is a set-piece like the elaborate creations of a firework display. Indeed, is it not significant that the latest born of the great 'Plan' conceptions of life, Marxian Communism, should have had to adopt the form of an interpretation of history to get itself accepted? We need not enlarge on the dilemma in which the Marxists find themselves involved as a consequence. Somewhat similar attempts to impose a Plan upon the Process—to lay down, as it were, the syllabus which the course of History is to follow—are made from time to time. The most recent of them is voluminously set out in Spengler's *Decline of the Western Lands*. Attempts to deduce Laws of Progress from History are of the same essential nature.

The modern Western mind is less and less disposed to accept *any* Plan that purports to be complete and

satisfying. It has too lively a sense of the infinite fruitfulness of the universe and of the multitudinous possibilities that still lie within it. The very adjective which is now so commonly used to qualify our idea of evolution, '*Emergent Evolution*', is strongly suggestive of this conviction of new possibilities, as yet unrealized and unpredictable.

Such an atmosphere accords well with the temper of the English mind. For is not the British Constitution itself at once the product and the fruitful seed-bed of such emergents? The same quality is to be traced in other English institutions such as the Church, and the strong faith in the infinite possibilities of experience that characterizes English literature is a product of the same temper. Indeed, we may feel that the characteristic English mind and temper were never more significant for the world at large than they are to-day.

This, however, by the way. The general point to note is that ideas of continuity of structure and movement have largely displaced the old ideas of plan and minute classification.

The effect on our attitude towards History and therefore on the spirit in which we should communicate its significance, even to Little Arthur, ought now to be clear enough.

In the first place the idea of 'Time matters both more and less. More because Time is now one of the dimensions in which we conceive Reality. Instead of seeing Reality spread out in a plane as it were, in the space continuum of a Plan, we view it as a whole which

has depth also, or, as the philosophers put it, as a space-time continuum. Conversely, Time matters less, because we do not feel that it is of the essence of Reality. The Spirit which reveals itself in the infinite manifestations of Reality is timeless, and the achievement of Julius Caesar or Hammurabi is as much a part of its life as that of Woodrow Wilson or Lenin. It is upon this that Croce has seized in his assertion that 'All true history is contemporary history'. At first sight it seems to be the height of paradoxical perversity to define History by means of the elimination of Time itself. But we shall hardly teach history fruitfully unless we conquer Time in doing so; unless, that is, the reality of Julius Caesar is as much *alive* to us here and now as the reality of our next-door neighbour mowing his lawn.

Not only does the line between past and present become less absolute and arbitrary. So, too, does the line between present and future. True, we cannot actually *foretell* what will happen. Reality remains always free and creative. But the realization that the present here and now, having the past continuous with it and *alive* in it, is itself History, makes the future less unknown and therefore all the more confidently to be faced. We shall give an illustration of this presently, drawn from the life of South Africa. So the emphasis in our reading of History now is on *direction of tendency* rather than on the analysis and classification of detailed facts. 'Events' have no sort of independence, and dates even are of less significance, except to the professional historian whose business it is to provide History with proper materials.

Moreover, our concern now is with the *whole* movement of the human spirit, of the whole activity of men in association. The difference between History and the biographies of great men should be clear enough now. Such biographies are comments upon History, or material for it, rather than History itself.

Most of all, the changed view of History focuses itself with full concentration upon the *present* as the field of significance. And this for two main reasons. In the first place the present is the source of the questions and perplexities for which we seek a solution in a knowledge of the past. Not in a past that is by and done with, but in a past that, so far as it is real at all, is alive and active in the present. This, indeed, is the second reason. The present is no abstract point or plane, but the terminal, as it were, of a continuous past. And the past is seen differently according to the structure and outlook of the present from which it is viewed. This alone should be sufficient to dispose of the idea that an 'impartial' History, in any absolute sense, can ever be possible. Who, for instance, could write a History of the Reformation that would be purely objective and stand unquestioned in all ages?

And so, as Dr. Barker has put it: 'History makes us spectators of this present time and this contemporary existence with all the past that they contain. History is the achieved self-consciousness of the spirit in the present phase, viewing itself in all its fullness as containing the past which is part of its present.'

Recently South Africa has passed through a protracted and dangerous controversy about the design for

a national flag. The bitterness of the contention was due to the attitude of a strong section of the people, not exclusively Dutch, who demanded that the national flag should express a clean cut with the past and be symbolical of a fresh start. There was much that was laudable in such a demand, for South African history has in it much that might well be forgotten. But no people, any more than an individual, can destroy all or a part of the inheritance of memories and still retain its individuality. Rooted sorrows are not so blotted from the memory. So the bitter conflict was joined just because of a past that refused to be ignored in that it was also the present.

Of such quarrels we say that Time alone can heal them. What we mean is not that in course of time an active past ceases to exist, but that it comes to function differently and to wear a different aspect in a changed present. So the statesman who does not realize that the past changes as well as the present is not fit for his job. Think, for instance, of the account we should write of the Great War to-day, and compare it with the account we should have written in 1919.

The point is of such fundamental importance for Little Arthur's History that, at the risk of being tedious, a few more illustrations must be given. We need say no more here about the identification of Philosophy and History which is the work of Croce, except to say that it is an attempt to put into philosophical form that view of the relation between past and present which we are here discussing.

More striking as an illustration is the keenness with

which economic history is now being written and studied. Why should this be if not because a changed present calls for a changed interpretation of the past that is still active within it? Now there is no country in the world where the social and economic relationships of the past are more strongly operative in present life than in England, and their operation is being increasingly challenged from every side. Hence the growing demand, justifiable or not, for a reinterpretation of history to accord with the common man's estimation of his place in the present. Instinctively he knows that the irritations and bafflements of the present have their roots in the past, and he wants an interpretation of the past which will reveal to him the whole growth. Then he finds his present situation 'explained' and he knows better what to do about it.

Religion itself is being 'explained' in much the same way, less to the hurt of religion in general than to that of certain historic forms of religious expression. A book like Sir J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough* is thus to be classed along with that recent output of economic history which, among other things, has quite revolutionized our conception of the Industrial Revolution.

We noted above an illustration from South Africa of the persistence of the past in the present. Let us take one now that illustrates the presence of the *future* in the present. ('New' countries, especially countries with peculiarly complex social structure, can afford many such illustrations.)

Europeans in South Africa are increasingly agitated about the future of the European population as against



the native Bantu peoples, who outnumber it by at least three to one. Some talk of a future 'swamping' by natives, not pausing to define very clearly how the swamping process is to take effect. Others fear violent conflict, failing to realize that for the Bantu to have any chance of success under the conditions of modern warfare, they must already have reached a level of intelligence and disciplined organization such that armed conflict would not be necessary.

It is only too probable that the reality of the future is already to be found here and now in the present. That reality consists in the steady *corrosion* of the morale of a white people living in the midst of a large subject population which performs its arduous labour for it, corrupts in a thousand subtle ways its civilized standards, and produces, in consequence, a steadily growing crop of 'poor whites', who are unable, in the circumstances, to maintain themselves at white standards. There seems to be little need to forecast some dramatic and catastrophic event or series of events (like a cinema-film) when the active process of the future is here to be studied in the present. But just as a past may change with a changing present, so may a future. The coming of a new point of view and a new basis of policy may arrest the corrosion or, at least, set in a different perspective the factors that bring it about.

Here, then, we have past, present, and future held together in the focus of the present. What is needed if we, especially the teachers among us, are to get a firm grip of this conception and make it operative in

our teaching in an age that needs it badly? Surely the divine gift of Imagination. And that is a matter of both heart and head. Lord Morley quotes approvingly a French saying that great thoughts come from the heart, and adds the British comment: 'But they must go round by the head.'

Without such Imagination the most erudite teacher can do little for Arthur's History. That is why we have ventured so rashly on such boggy ground. It seems a far cry from such airy speculations to the very practical business of teaching history to a grubby little boy from a back-street. But we cannot hope to teach history (though we may pass on the statements of a history-book) to any good effect unless we have an idea of what history is. And the idea must be in us as a living principle of life and behaviour. The still, sad music of humanity must swell for us to the force and volume of a whole vast symphony.

To get such an idea of what history is, is a high and difficult matter. That must be the defence for the inclusion of such a chapter as this in what promised to be a plain and simple discussion of the needs of a very ordinary human boy.

[Readers who know Mr. R. H. Gretton's closely packed essay on *History* in the 'Art and Craft of Letters' Series, Mr. J. W. Allen's *The Place of History in Education*, and Dr. Barker's illuminating study on 'History and Philosophy' in vol. vii of *History*, will realize how great is my debt to these writers.]

## IV

### ARTHUR'S SEAT

So far we have considered Little Arthur and the kind of world into which he is born; we have noted his need of 'History' as an instrument for the elucidation of that world; we have suggested a view of the nature of Knowledge which should determine the teacher's handling of the material; and we have made an effort to arrive at some clear idea of the nature of the 'material' itself.

Now we have to set the child in the midst, to locate Arthur's position as a potential student of 'History' in this scheme of things.

Arthur's quest, if he is normally intelligent, has a well-marked objective. What he seeks always is *significance*. Why are things as they are? What are they for? How did they come to be? When did they begin? No one who has lived for many years close to ordinary children, whether he be a psychologist or not, can doubt that significance is all their search. And the 'things' of which the significance is sought are the present and immediate things. Can there be any doubt, then, of the location of Arthur's Seat, of the point from which all his thinking and investigation must start? Clearly it is firmly fixed in the *Present*, and nowhere else. How well this accords with the view of History that was set out in the last chapter needs no emphasis.

If, then, it is significance that Arthur seeks—the significance of the things around him, as yet not so

'familiar' as over-sophisticated writers on education often take them to be—and if History is the means whereby a supremely important aspect of their significance can be brought home to him, it should follow that his History teaching starts from the present and continually returns to it. For the business of History teaching is to make the present transparent to the past, to enable Arthur to see his present in terms of *depth* as it were.

It is the chief purpose of this book to lay emphasis on this as *the* fundamental principle for the teaching of History to every Little Arthur who is to know his world better and to live in it more effectively as a result of such teaching. Yet nothing is so persistently and almost contemptuously denied by many writers on the subject than this very thing.

Thus one writer, in a systematic work on the Teaching of History, says quite roundly: 'It is distinctly uninteresting for children to begin with the commonplace present.' 'Distinctly uninteresting' we pass. But *the commonplace present!* For *children!* If it be commonplace, whose is the fault? The same writer, when he is contemplating children as such apart from all thought of conventional methods of teaching History, would readily agree, we are sure, that Curiosity is an outstanding quality of childhood. Curiosity about what; and for what? For an answer just watch Arthur exploring in street or field or, worst of all, in the family circle.

From what other point, indeed, can the teaching of Arthur start, in any subject whatever, if not from

Arthur's present world? And to what should it return if not to that? Should Arthur begin Nature Study with the comparative anatomy of the dragon? Or Geography with the map of Utopia? Or Arithmetic with the mystic numbers of Revelation and the Book of Daniel? Why should Arthur be a perfectly natural normal human boy, when we teach him any other subject, and become an impossible etherealized fairy creature when we have to teach him History? What is wrong in such an anomaly, the psychology of Arthur, or the underlying conception of Arthur's History?

Still more curt and unequivocal is the treatment accorded to a fundamental truth by another book on the Teaching of History which has had considerable vogue. This time the dismissal comes with all the weight and authority of three collaborators whose competence is not open to question. They present a crude distortion of the doctrine in the form of what they call the 'Policeman theory' of teaching history and then pronounce judgement upon it with summary finality:

'We are told to raise the question, who appoints the policeman, and after that by a sequence on the lines of 'The House that Jack Built' we are to go through the whole hierarchy of British Government.'

Triumphantly they point to 51 & 52 Vict., c. 41, as settling the whole matter, and the policeman and his theory are curtly dismissed.

How convincing it sounds, and yet how perversely and gravely mistaken it is in reality! If our authors could only forget Governments and 'political' history

for a while and set out with a resolute effort to form some sort of picture of the whole common human effort, they would see the policeman not as the creation of a Victorian Act of Parliament (if, indeed, Acts of Parliament ever create anything), but as a necessary *function* of human society at its irreducible civilized minimum. Arthur learns something about Law and Order quite early, even in the home. In street and playground he feels the need for policing his games. There are rules and, as he knows from experience, nothing but noisy confusion results if the contestants take upon themselves the enforcement of the rules. And if Arthur lives in London and has ever passed the Mansion House or Charing Cross, he has learned already that the policeman stands for something much more real and ancient and permanent than 51 & 52 Vict., cap. 41.

A further example afforded by our three authors reveals even more strikingly the completeness of the misunderstanding. Here is the dictum, couched in the same contemptuous terms:

‘Nor has familiarity any charm in itself; we could hardly say that our interest is greatly aroused by a coal-scuttle, though we use it every day.’

No more unhappy instance could possibly have been chosen. We can dismiss the issue whether familiarity has any charm in itself, only remarking that our authors should consult the English poets on the point, and expressing the conviction that they must themselves have experienced the exquisite pleasure that springs from the charm of familiar things. Let us rather look at

the coal-scuttle over which they stumble so surprisingly. What other purpose has teaching if not to reveal the depths of significance in things thought familiar? If we are not to begin with familiar things, are we then to begin with things utterly strange as another would seem to suggest? Or would not our authors rather agree to read the familiar maxim 'Proceed from the known to the unknown' in the form 'Develop the implications of the known'? (In passing we may note that this is itself an example; 'Proceed from the known to the unknown' sounds so familiar, yet its implications would fill a large and learned book.)

But to our coal-scuttle. Out of it highly valuable 'History' lessons for a whole term could be drawn for Arthur. In 1926 the scuttle was empty. Could not Arthur, so far as he is able to understand, be told why, whether the lesson be called Geography or History? Had Henry VIII a coal-scuttle? Why not? Could there be such big towns as there are to-day—London, for instance—if there were no coal-scuttles? And why is it made of iron? An infinity of questions could be asked about that coal-scuttle, every one of them pointing towards some profound historic significance in Arthur's surroundings that, sooner or later, he should come to understand.

We have said that the business of History teaching is to make the present transparent to the past. Through the opaque blackness of that homely receptacle Arthur can get his first clear glimpse of the immense transformation of life and work that we call the Industrial Revolution. Does not its teaching virtue consist exactly

in its familiarity and ubiquity? Yet just because it is familiar our authors reject it with contempt and transport Arthur to the profoundly educative unfamiliarities of the Ancient Britons.

Another example from a different writer of this inexplicable horror of the familiar Present on Arthur's account is even more piquant. We quote it from a Report of 1902 by a lady teacher on 'The Teaching of History in the Schools of Germany and Belgium'. In her travels the author came across attempts to teach History on the lines we are here advocating. Before it can be fit for public discussion the 'method' must be baptized, as it were, and receive a name. So it becomes the 'Regressive Method'. The report gives prominence to it, and offers an account of a lesson given to little Belgians beginning with the horridly familiar question, 'Where do you go after school?' Then followed an informal talk between teacher and children about the dull familiar things of Home and their historic significances. But the author's English training and her sense of pedagogic orthodoxy are too strong to allow of submission, so she says:

'The Regressive Method always seems strange to us and illogical. ['Illogical' here probably means non-chronological.] It also seems non-psychological, for children do not naturally look back from an event to the causes which led to it; this belongs to a later stage of development. Nor can it be justified on the principle of going from the known to the unknown, for the present in which they live is not a known quantity with which to compare an unknown past.'



Here may be seen how great is the power of the very notion of teaching History to children to confound and pervert the results of ordinary everyday observation! For we may assume that the author would never have made such statements about children, had the discussion concerned the teaching of any other subject. Children, we are told, do not naturally look back from an event to the causes which led to it. We can only say that we have never met such children. Why have we all those stories about Father Christmas, and storks, and Adam and Eve? Why have such stories been invented and used in all ages, if not to put off pestering children, too inquisitive about the causes of things?

Again, we are told of the children's world, that 'it is not a known quantity with which to compare an unknown past'. What, then, *is* a known quantity if not the daily world in which the children live? Have they any other standard of comparison? Why does the girl in a paper marked 'A' in the appendix of a recent report on History teaching in London say that Wat Tyler and his men revolted because their wages were too small? Surely, the trouble is exactly the other way. Children *will* persistently carry back their own experience of the present into their interpretation of the past. (They are not alone in so doing.) What else can the poor things do? And is the relation between present and past to be just one of *comparison*? There is much more in it than that and to put it that way is to misconceive the whole problem.

The Report is clearly arguing against the light, an

example of what the psychologists nowadays call 'rationalization'. It consists essentially in the attempt to fortify a prejudice by statements which would never have been made at all were the prejudice not there.

The Report argues that the Regressive Method may be right for Belgium and Germany as the respective political régimes under which they live are of such recent origin, and you do not have to regress very far. As though the events of 1830 and 1871 have anything very seriously to do with the real business of teaching History to Little Arthurs even in Belgium and Germany! The reference is exactly comparable to the procedure of the three authors in clubbing the policeman with 51 & 52 Vict. c. 1. What we may perhaps venture to call its curious English perversity may be compared with a famous minority report submitted by two English-speaking members of a Commission that inquired into education in the Cape in 1911. The burden of the report was that the principle of giving to young children their early teaching through the medium of the mother tongue was thoroughly sound, but that for various special reasons it was not sound for Dutch-speaking children in South Africa!

The type of 'rationalization' is essentially the same in both cases. For the sake of some dearly-held prejudice or inherited convention of orthodoxy, the natural child must be represented as a misbegotten monster whose behaviour can be accounted for on no grounds of common sense or common psychology.

The chapter on *History* in the last edition of the Board of Education's *Suggestions to Teachers* appears

not to raise the issue at all. One can only hope that that is not because it assumes that the whole question is settled, or that the 'Regressive Method' is too absurd and unpsychological for any serious consideration.

We maintain, then, that Arthur's Seat is here in this present world, that the History teacher must begin with that world as he finds it, must call attention to the familiar things in it, just because they are familiar, must trace back the living historic structure of these familiar things and make them historically meaningful; in a word that he must make Arthur's world itself eloquent with History. From it and back to it all the teaching must proceed.

Why, then, should a principle so obvious be met with such torrents of almost indignant contempt? The reasons are worth inquiring into, for the inquiry throws much light on the causes of the ineffectiveness of Arthur's history teaching in the past.

The first is the obsession with chronology. History is a procession and we must walk along its length from the cave-men or the Ancient Britons down to the League of Nations. Here is that over-exaltation of the time factor that works so much mischief. The time-map has its importance, even at this early stage, but that importance can easily be exaggerated. As we shall see later, the whole notion of Time and of intervals of time is full of difficulties, often unsuspected by the complacent teacher proud of a class well-drilled in dates. 'A long time ago' is good enough for the placing of quite a number of events. Some of us can remember the days when we were expected at school to be able to

draw minutely accurate maps in Geography. Now we realize how much of misdirected effort there was in such work. We understand now that the build, the distribution of rainfall and minerals, and industries, say in North America, can be quite sufficiently shown and impressed by very roughly drawn maps. So, too, with the time-map.

Another misconception which seems to underlie the rejection of what has been called—not by us—the Regressive Method, is the persistent confusion of History with the contents of a book. The main road to a knowledge of History lies, for most of us, through books. But we ought not to need a Croce ever at our elbow in order to realize that the matter of the book is not History at all until it has been *interpreted* in living form by a living spirit. The capacity so to interpret is not necessarily strengthened by much reading. It is derived far more from a sense of having oneself contributed to the actual *making* of History. Naturally this is easier for those who, like the Macaulays and Morleys, have been actually in close touch with the settlement of great affairs. But every man, in his measure, however humble, can have the experience for himself by the simple process of attending to it.

If the writers of history text-books, still more of text-books of 'method' in History teaching, would put books aside for a moment and reflect upon their own social activities and contacts, their committees, their societies, their buying and selling, the direction of their family affairs, and the whole round of forms of co-operation in which they try to get things done by

bringing influence to bear upon others, they would get an idea of the real nature of the historic process much more true and vital than masses of uninterpreted reading could ever give. For, after all, History is just the common life, and the most real and lively part of it is the life of here and now in which we actively share.

Historians and teachers of History have especial need of a warm and vigorous grasp of this truth. Historians themselves may well mislead us in this regard, with their literary tricks and their eye for the dramatic. Carlyle, for example, and still more Macaulay. Of the latter, Lord Morley, a peculiarly competent critic, remarks in his dry way, that he is 'full of cleverness, full of detailed knowledge, extraordinarily graphic and interesting, but I cannot make myself like the style. *That is not the way in which things happen*' (Italics ours). It could hardly be said of Macaulay that he had no knowledge of the way in which things happen. But he was inclined to over-simplify the facts in seeking literary effect. There are writers to-day of whom much the same may be said. To read History with safety we may need to know almost as much about the historian as about the period of which he writes. The best check on him is to have had our own experience of 'the way in which things happen', and to have reflected upon it long and critically, free from the possibly misleading suggestions of other minds.

Once we have detached History from the book and caught a bit of it alive, as it were, we may do something to rid ourselves of another obsession, that of 'Method'. Largely, as we have seen, this excessive pre-occupation

with Method is an inheritance from the days when the equipment of the teacher of Arthur's History was very little else but Method. A real knowledge of what History is, especially History for Arthur, will do much not only to reduce Method to its proper proportions, but also to get rid of some of those amazing misrepresentations of Arthur's nature which have to be adduced in support of its deficiencies. So long as History is seen not as a growing and living illumination of intelligence in Arthur's expanding life, but as a series of assertions in a book, the artificial devices of a precariously founded 'Method' will have to be invoked.

But there is, perhaps, another element in the general misunderstanding that cuts even deeper. It concerns education at large and not merely the teaching of History. In accepting, as we must, the traditional aims of History-teaching—patriotism, moral training, citizenship, and the rest—we may fail, nevertheless, to make clear the meaning of education as a whole and so to define with precision the peculiar contribution that History well taught can make to it? It is usual for writers on Method to put a discussion of Aims in the forefront of their work. We propose to say little about it in set form, for it seems to us unreasonable to assert categorically what can be done with a thing—in this case History teaching—until you are quite certain what the thing itself is. But the point is mentioned here because we suspect that a careful reconsideration of what education is about would have helped the writers to whom we have referred to avoid some obvious misconceptions about the teaching of History.

But the tyranny of convention and of a bad tradition in the practice of English elementary education is still enormously strong. Perhaps the indignant horror of the very idea of regarding Arthur's present world as the heart and centre of his History teaching is, in a curiously crooked fashion, the fruit of a generous reaction against that tradition. 'Let the poor boy have his dreams,' it seems to say: 'Get him away from this drab world and put him among the cave-men, the Ancient Britons, the Greek gods, medieval gargoyles—anywhere but in this oppressive and humdrum present'. The same sort of over-driven romanticism is apt to oppose school itself to employment in industry, not only as the one place of education, but as an all too brief refuge of light and irresponsibility against the long dullness to come.

The result is that we fail to make use of the educative resources which Arthur's world, drab as it may seem, provides in rich measure. And to support our mistaken prejudice we misinterpret hopelessly Arthur's very real interest in 'yarns' as though, through them, he was striving to get away from himself and his world, instead of to know both himself and it better.

No more need be said on this point here as we propose to devote a whole chapter to a discussion of Yarns.

Enough has been said, we hope, to vindicate Arthur's claim to a firmly fixed seat in the Here and Now, from which he can reach out all around him to grasp History. And something has been said to defend his claim to it against the insidious underminings of those who, for

Arthur's good, would uproot him to begin with and transport him to Dreamland, there to equip him with fairy weapons wherewith to face, in due course, a prosaic world.

Having fixed Arthur's Seat, we have now to determine the reasonable range of his reach from it, and to that task we must now address ourselves.



## V

### ARTHUR'S REACH

ARTHUR'S Seat may thus be regarded as a point of growing human consciousness set in the midst of a space-time continuum. From it, the spirit that is Arthur reaches out into space and time to follow out the threads that bind up his particular Self with a universe that comes to self-consciousness in him as he learns.

It is the purpose of this chapter to attempt to determine the normal reach of Arthur's grasp within the limits of the stage of education with which we are here concerned. That stage may be regarded as ending at somewhere about the age of twelve. In England to-day Arthur's schooling must continue until he is, at least, fourteen, soon, we hope, to be fifteen. Fortunately, there is no need to labour now the necessity for the break of gauge at about twelve. In the final years of his schooling Arthur should now have opportunities in a properly organized senior school for a much more systematic study of at least the beginnings of serious History than have hitherto been available for him in the ordinary elementary school.

What he can do up to the age of twelve is really a sort of propaedeutic to History, consisting of equipment with the weapons—with the general conceptions, the notions of human society and co-operation, and the first knowledge of great historic phases—that he will need for the more serious study. Hence, though we do

not consider here the business of senior-school History, we can never quite lose sight of it. For it is at that stage that we can begin to look for fruition.

Arthur's outlook in time and space respectively is expressed in his History and Geography. The distinction is, of course, not absolute, for Geography itself has a history, and History has the earth for its theatre. There are objections to the view sometimes taken that History is concerned with Arthur's human environment and Geography with his natural environment. On the view here taken of the nature of History this distinction will not serve. For Arthur's Geography has the same ultimate focus as his History, namely his Present with all its possibilities of developing significance. Geography will be quite as 'human' as History. Indeed Arthur, if properly taught, will very soon come to realize how the threads of Mother Earth's influence are interwoven in infinite complexity with the associated life of man. Take, for instance, the all-important factor of food-supply and its influence on the growth and form of human communities. Geography and History are here hardly distinguishable. Again, when we come to develop the range of Arthur's acquaintance with the varied forms of associated human life, we shall go quite as readily to the distant in place as to the distant in time for our examples. Eskimos and Polynesians of to-day will be quite as relevant to our purpose as Ancient Britons of 2,000 years ago or Neolithic man of 10,000. (Notice here again how the time factor has been exaggerated in importance.)

Moreover, Geography and geographical influences are

themselves subject to change. What were once deserts are deserts no longer, and our Earth is far smaller and more compact than that of Sir Francis Drake.

So at the primary stage we shall not concern ourselves very much with the question whether the lessons we give are rightly to be called History or Geography. They have all the same ultimate intent and focus, the elucidation of the present world. It is quite unnecessary to evoke yet another 'subject' of dubious validity and to talk elaborately about Historical Geography.

Though what follows is concerned mainly with the determination of the limits of Arthur's reach outwards in time, i.e. with History, we shall experience throughout the necessity for frequent reference to Geography both by way of analogy in respect of methods of teaching and also by way of real identity between the two.

Let us begin by asking what initial equipment of vision we shall require in Arthur if he is to be trained to see as we want him to see. Fortunately the initial equipment is not great and is to be found in abundance in all normal Arthurs. It consists essentially of two things:

1. Some actual experience of human group-activities and of the forms of human association.
2. Some degree of what can be called—to give it a big name—human enthusiasm. That is, some measure of zest for life, and of *curiosity* about its forms and activities.

In regard to the first it is easy to underestimate how much Arthur already knows about associated life when he first comes to school. He has learned much in the

family circle and may be expected to have some quite definite ideas about aunts and uncles and cousins, about money and wages, about letters and postage stamps, about customs and festivals like Christmas and Bank Holidays, about shops and common material needs, and, indeed, about all the thousand and one forms in which the general life of society impinges upon and interpenetrates the life of the home community.

From the life of the street he picks up another set of links. Mechanical invention and utilities, law and order, sanitation, public security, public news, and the shrieks of modern commerce from sky-sign and hoarding—symbols and manifestations of all these and many more crowd upon him in too bewildering profusion.

If he has been to church occasionally he will have come into touch with yet another form of group-life, and will have asked, no doubt, the usual questions about it. And there will be other forms, too, that need not be further specified.

As to the second pre-requisite, enthusiasm and curiosity, need there be any doubt about it, except among those who, in support of an antiquated and mistaken orthodoxy, would have us believe that children are not interested in the familiar things of the commonplace present and have neither the disposition nor the power to look back from events to the causes from which they spring?

Assuming, then, that Arthur comes to us with the necessary equipment in lively abundance, what are we to do with it? Shall we leave it all on one side to tell him yarns about Ancient Britons and cave-men? Or

shall we rather approach Ancient Britons and cave-men through it and by means of it, not worrying ourselves to ask whether, in so doing, we are 'regressing' or not. Surely the answer is clear. Here in Arthur's present life and interests is the beginning and end of all our teaching. It would be necessary to apologize for reiterating so persistently a truth so obvious were it not for the fact that authorities on the teaching of history repudiate it with so much indignation. If this much be accepted, we can now proceed to elaborate the ways in which teaching can use and develop the rich store of living experience-material that Arthur brings to school with him.

It may conduce to greater clearness if we state them all concisely to begin with.

1. Simple analysis of the social surroundings, and first suggestions of historic continuity in regard to them.
2. Development and illustration of the fundamental fact of *Change*.
3. Investigation and illustration of the forces and factors that *make* History.
4. Organization of Content (in a variety of forms).

The work will not necessarily be done in this order, but the four kinds of activity may be taken as representing the field of Arthur's reach in the primary school stage up to about the age of twelve.

Let us then proceed to consider briefly what is indicated by each one of the suggested activities, offering however the caution that they do not necessarily correspond to distinct types of *lesson*.

More than one kind of activity may come into any one lesson. We are concerned rather with the different *kinds* of things that Arthur will be called upon to do with his material, rather than with separate kinds of lesson. We beg the reader to believe that we are here concerned with something more than the invention of a new 'Method', whether regressive or not.

1. Obviously the first thing to do is to sort out Arthur's rather chaotic store, to get it into some kind of order, and by degrees to suggest to him the points of high significance. For what he has to do here is nothing less than to form his first collection of human key-specimens wherewith to attack the unravelling of the vast enigma that still lies beyond.

'The analogy with Geography should help us here. It may well be a source of some amazement, when we come to reflect upon it, that ideas and methods which have been so fruitful and beneficent in their application to the teaching of Geography, should not only not have been applied to the closely parallel case of History, but should meet with such curt rejection by those who, presumably, would be their strong advocates, when Geography teaching was in question. For, in the beginnings of Geography teaching, do we not proceed in exactly the same way as is here recommended for History? We know that Little Arthur can form no satisfactory idea of North America, or even of England, if we begin with that. We have first to equip him with the necessary tools of interpretation, and to do that we set him to analyse his own geographic surroundings. He studies direction and the positions of the sun, he looks into the

action of wind and frost and water, he makes or he sees made models of hill and valley, lake and river, he takes little excursions to study the topography of the immediate neighbourhood, and he makes his own little maps and plans to try to express in proper form the positions and relations of the things he has seen.

There is no need to elaborate further. Everybody knows how the thing is done, and everybody rejoices that it is done so intelligently and so well.

Why, then, is a similar procedure not adopted for History? We should not dream, in Geography teaching, of transporting Little Arthur straight away to books and North America. But in teaching History we whisk him out of his world altogether and haul him off to Yarns and Ancient Britons! Not only do we do so, but we glory in it, and argue that that is the very thing that Arthur loves! For him, anything whatever but the commonplace present!

The futilities of current History teaching, we are convinced, can never be remedied, until this glaring and indefensible anomaly is fully recognized, fairly faced, and speedily ended.

Clearly, then, what we have to do is to take family relationships and houses and food-getting, and clothing, and money and shops, and postage-stamps, and communications and policemen, and dust-carts, and all the rest of it, and if not make maps of them, at least try to see what they *mean* and how they are related. Always the emphasis will be on human *groups* and the better life men can live when they learn to co-operate. For what a miracle of group co-operation does a postage-

stamp stand ? It is of the commonplace present. Yet is not the significance of it just the very kind of thing that Arthur needs to grasp if History is to be alive and meaningful for him ? What vast records of struggle and endeavour lie implicit in its commonplace surface ! The League of Nations itself is merely a cumbrous and panoplied instrument for achieving in other fields just that kind of co-operation for which the postage-stamp stands.

Or take again the dust-cart or the school water-supply. Here again are things commonplace and even lowly. But they, rather than distant Abana and Pharpar, are the Jordan in which History teaching must dip to be cured of its present leprosy. Health and the conditions of it are things that even children can think about and be interested in. How meaningful even the dust-cart becomes when it is seen as taking the place of the dead-cart of Plague days !

Not only will the teaching emphasize co-operation, but it will bring in at all points the suggestion of a *history*, of a time when these things took other forms, often less satisfactory than they are to-day. Illustrative story will be invoked freely and widely and *just at the point where it is needed*. That, indeed, is the proper use of stories. We have ourselves experienced the value of some talk with children about Abraham and Jacob and the patriarchal tribal family after an analysis of their ideas about family relationships, and family life to-day. And we can remember the keen delight with which a class of little girls listened to Kipling's story of 'The Cat that Walked by Itself',



after a series of lessons on 'Ways of Food-Getting'. (Kipling, by the way, will be found altogether admirable for this purpose, for he approaches childhood with none of the sophistications of school or of conventional History teaching.)

As the teaching proceeds, the material will tend to fall into a rough arrangement, and the teacher would do well to work out tentatively a plan of such arrangement beforehand. Family Life, Food, Communications, Buying and Selling, Houses, would be some of the headings. Lessons at first would be a little haphazard, following the chances and accidents of general talk about things, but it would be the teacher's business gradually to work round to some kind of organization of the material.

Such work, carried on for a year or two, possibly along with other kinds of History work, should produce at least two invaluable results :

(a) The awakening of historic interest, of capacity to take what may be called the historic attitude towards the things of common experience.

(b) A store of *interpretative material*, which, like the corresponding geographical material, has been subjected to preliminary analysis and definition. It is again significant of the confusion and perversity in which our ideas of History teaching still lie bogged that the need for such material should be so strangely overlooked. So we get children writing about the causes of Wat Tyler's Rebellion, who know nothing at all of the economy of English rural life to-day, and trying to follow the intricate history of the Civil War and its

issues, while knowing little or nothing of ideas of public right and responsibility as actually existing in the world around them. 'There is hardly a subject in the whole range of stock topics for 'History' that does not call for the use of such interpretative material, worked out deliberately from the pupil's actual experience, if it is to be understood with any intelligence at all. Yet to assert this is, apparently, to be met by the categorical declaration that for children 'the present is not a known quantity with which to compare an unknown past'.

Once more, should we ever dream of approaching any other subject whatever, except History, before making sure that our pupils had at command such relevant interpretative material as they were capable of acquiring and using?

2. Next to this preliminary analysis of the present we may consider the line of approach by our pupils towards what may be called the other dimension, the idea of *Change*. For Change, not Time, is the historic idea, and children cannot be impressed with the fact too early. The notion will be constantly present in all the teaching, for the full grasp of it takes a long, long time, and by many people is never achieved at all.

And it can be handled in very simple though highly vivid form from the first. There can be few English towns to-day which do not afford examples of the invasion of pleasant fields and woods by the advance of the builder, and public trusts have to be formed to save a few fragments from his maw. Yet who can stop it any more than he can stop the straightening of old winding highways for the service of the motor? In the

countryside examples of change may be present in melancholy plenty.

From the sight of change actually going on before their eyes, children can pass without serious difficulty to examples of much greater change, of longer duration, and not actually proceeding before them. For they have now the necessary interpretative material. One aspect of the common life after another can be traced back—of course in a very general way—to earlier forms. In this way we may begin thus early to fulfil Acton's maxim, 'Study problems, rather than periods'.

Stories will again be freely used here, and pictures and models and historic remains will be used freely also. Books like the Quennells's *History of Common Things*—a welcome sign of a better day—make the undertaking a little less burdensome than it might have been. We are less at a loss now when Johnny suddenly looks up from his plate and demands: 'Daddy, when were forks first used?'

The importance of constant emphasis upon the idea of change and of abundant illustration of it can hardly be exaggerated. It is not too much to say that a reasonable and adequate grasp of it is a main essential for the healthy life of a democratic community. For its presence in full strength reduces both fear of the future and impatience with the inheritance of the past, the two factors which, from one side or the other, are always tending to rend apart the texture of a democracy. And while it inspires reasonable confidence, it inspires also tolerance, for tolerance has at its root the conviction that God fulfils Himself in many ways. Religion

may teach this as a precept, but it is sound History teaching from the very first which must bring it into the form of a settled habit of mind built up from the accumulation of a multitude of observed instances.

Another illustration from personal experience may be given here. An elementary school class of boys—a top class this time—had received two lessons on the history of Religious Persecution. When the day came for the third and final lesson, it happened to fall on a Jewish holiday, and, the majority of the class being of that faith, the lesson had to be given to the Gentile remainder. Here was an opportunity. The remnant were asked, 'Why were these boys away? Should they not be compelled to attend school seeing that the law required it?' We then set ourselves to work out the problem in the light of its history and resolved, in the end, that as a result of changing ideas in the course of bitter experience, we had learned that such compulsions and persecutions simply did not pay, and that we were all of us better off for mutual recognition of our honest differences. There is more in this example than the significance and value of a grasp of the idea of Change, but as it does well illustrate that point it may be in place here.

3. Counterbalancing the weight that is placed on the idea of Change we have a factor of permanence and fixity in human nature itself. Change is itself the result of human action, the issue of human wills, a fact which is sometimes forgotten by well-meaning folk who say 'Not Revolution but Evolution'. Hence one essential part of the propaedeutic to History is some analysis of

typical human motives and emotions and actions in typical situations. Really, what we have here is another kind of interpretative material, and the neglect to secure its presence is almost as great in this instance as in that of the other kind we have discussed. It should be possible to refine and sharpen very considerably children's ideas of the nature and variety of human motive. They are capable of more than a black and white discrimination between those kings who did evil and those who did right in the sight of the Lord. Lady Callcott herself oversimplifies both the men and women of history and Little Arthur himself in this way. She may have had the excuse of being under the influence of Old Testament conceptions of history, and of the general lack of moral subtlety which was characteristic of respectable Victorians.

We to-day have less excuse, unless we have recourse again to the device of the orthodox, and represent children as being other than they are. Can we not hope to lead them to form a reasonably adequate notion of the motives and feelings of, say, Charles I, or Warren Hastings, or Cromwell, even though we may fail with greater and more complex figures like Charlemagne, or Sir Thomas More, or Queen Elizabeth?

In any case they cannot be brought to reflect too early on the intricate mixture of good and evil in human actions. Otherwise they may fall easily into the Macaulayan error and see things other than as they were.

The best material for the purpose is to be drawn from literary rather than from historical sources, though it is to the interpretation of historical material that the

results will be applied. Biography is in its proper place here, and dramatic literature has high value provided we take care not to treat Shakespeare as an historian. It is a pity, too, even from this point of view, that the Bible has been so sadly neglected of recent years as a source of fine material. Many of the Old Testament stories and the Parables are capable of providing interpretative material of unique value. How frequently, for instance, may we have situations where the Pharisee and Publican, the Unjust Steward, or even the Good Samaritan might apply! In regard to the last of these we have sometimes suggested to young South Africans that if they put 'coloured man' for Samaritan they would be better able to grasp the real point of the story.

Very few actual History lessons will be needed for this kind of work. It will rather be a general care to draw from any source the key-material that is needed.

4. Finally—and this belongs mainly to the later stages of the work—we need to introduce some measure of organization into the growing content of Arthur's historical field. The disposition to rely so largely on a purely chronological basis for this purpose is altogether to be regretted. We shall have more to say about this later. For the present we will look rather at some of the essential conditions that organization should fulfil.

In the first place there should be achieved, before the end of the primary course, some scheme or framework to cover History in general. Of course such a scheme can be only very general at this stage, consisting of a few marked-out phases and the main time-posts. It is of high importance that pre-occupation with the details of

national history should not preclude the formulation of such a scheme, nor distort the perspective of it once it has been formulated. The point may be illustrated by reference to dates. A thousand Arthurs know 55 B.C. for one who knows 43 B.C., and a thousand know of Augustine's arrival in England in A.D. 597 for one who knows of the edict of Constantine officially establishing Christianity in A.D. 320. The English boy still leaves the elementary school with the haziest notions of the main framework of History, and the reason is partly the tyranny of book and Method, partly obsession with details of national history that might well give place to other data more valuable for the purpose of elucidating the world and life at large.

We do not propose here to sketch such a framework. Teachers will differ in their views as to the division of the map and the relative emphasis to be placed on its various portions. We reserve for the next chapter some suggestions of what might be included.

Another form of organization which, so far as we are aware, has been generally neglected, is suggested by the maxim of Lord Acton that we quoted above: 'Study problems rather than periods'. We may apply the maxim in this connexion to the organization of cognate material in what may be called a strand. If, for this purpose, we compare the course of history to a rope—or, still better, to a multiple cable—we may detect by analysis at this, the present end of it, certain strands that run back through its length. Almost any phase of life can be selected for the purpose provided it is sufficiently representative or important. The selection

will vary according to the interests and ideas of the teacher and according to the stage of learning that the pupils have reached. The strands of Food-getting, of Communications, of Buying and Selling, for instance, might be worked out comparatively early. Those, say, of Religious Freedom, of Public Safety, and possibly of Sanitation, might come later. In this connexion it is worth noting how much of the work would link up with other teaching; Buying and Selling with Arithmetic, and Sanitation with Nature Study. Language lessons would afford opportunity for the same kind of thing.

But the cable needs to be looked at not only from the longitudinal aspect but laterally also in cross-section. That preliminary analysis of the surrounding social structure of the present which we discussed earlier in this chapter is a study of the cross-section which the cable reveals at its growing end. As Arthur's knowledge grows and he can move about with some signs of ease in the general scheme that he is forming, we should do the same with the cable at other points. Again a geographical analogy is useful here. The idea is comparable to that of Regions, now a generally accepted basis for the organization of geographical knowledge. The well-taught pupil will be able to attach a definite meaning to such descriptions as Mediterranean Type, Alpine Type, Eastern or Western Margin Type, Tropical Lowland, and so on. Each of these expressions will suggest a certain collocation of factors of rainfall, temperature, vegetation and possibly configuration, that has for him a certain quality and unity of its own. So too in History there will be 'regions', and small regions within the



larger ones, which should have for Arthur something of the same kind of unity. Egyptian, Greek, Roman, medieval, renaissance, eighteenth century, are examples, not necessarily of the 'regions' that the teacher will select, but of the kind of thing that is meant. And as regions must have boundaries, it follows that it is in this kind of organization that the fixing of certain selected dates will be found necessary and useful.

But the mere fixing of boundaries is useless enough unless the region lying within them comes to have for Arthur an individual and recognizable character. Countries rich in local remains, especially architectural remains, and in good museums, are well-placed for this purpose. All sorts of devices can be used to fill out a content and to define features. How well, for instance, one side of eighteenth-century life is hit off by the lines:

In tea-cup time of starch and hoop  
And when the patch was worn!

In History, as in Geography, Arthur has to *learn his way about*, not merely to follow a single chronological tight-rope of dates. The forms of organization here suggested should assist him in doing so, so far as he is able.

Finally, there is organization on the basis of the national history. Nothing that has been said so far should be taken as meaning that this is to be neglected. To judge from appearances there is little danger of that. The question can be discussed more fully in the next chapter. Here we will note one or two cautions that ought to be observed in framing and using this quite indispensable basis of organization. While it is true

that Arthur's knowledge of the national history must be definitely organized as such, it must not be forgotten that the national history is still only a *type* of the main common stuff, another kind of historical 'region' if you like. Being the history of his own people it will be for Arthur in every way *the* typical and best-known region. But the mischief is done if he fails to see it *as* typical, as just one side of the whole effort, our contribution, interesting because it is ours, to the body of human Civilization. Further, the national history is not to be stressed to the point of distortion of historical perspective as a whole. The firm fixing of Arthur's general framework and the marking out of regions must see to that.

What, then, Arthur will come to see as the result of his teaching, and the organizing work that will go on—what will be, in a real though general form, the extent of his *reach*—is nothing less than Civilization itself, with his own life and the life of his people quite naturally in the centre of it.

That, really, is the sum of the whole matter. If the grasp of the meaning of Civilization in the world as a whole is weaker than it ought to be, perhaps precariously so, may not the reason be, in part at least, that History teaching, obsessed sometimes by the book, sometimes by Method, sometimes by over-drawn nationalism, has failed to understand the true nature of its subject matter?

## VI

### MEASURES OF VALUE

WE discussed in the last chapter the general range of Arthur's reach, and certain principles which might govern the organization of the material lying within it. We have now to consider the question of the standards of value according to which material is to be selected. There is no more difficult matter in the whole range of History teaching. Material is so abundant, much of it is so seductive, and we are apt to change our standards of value so easily in order to include matter which for some reason or other attracts us as teachers.

In the last chapter a pretty extensive range of reach was sketched out, which has to be covered in a very limited time. There is, clearly, no time to waste, and yet there is a vast field from which to choose.

Unhappily, there is a good deal of evidence that the present practice in most primary schools can hardly be called satisfactory. A recent Report by the Board of Education on the teaching of History in London Elementary Schools asserts roundly that the syllabus for younger children 'often shows little discrimination in the choice of material', while that for older children is often pretentious and overladen.

The example given of a lower class syllabus reveals plainly enough the chaotic results of over-emphasis on mere 'stories' as such, without regard to any clear

illuminating motive for the selection of them, and perhaps with illusory ideas of the sort of thing young children need and like.

Another remark in the Report is highly significant: 'There is a tendency to treat local History as a separate course in itself.' Here is *syllabitis* again, the disease which is marked by a passion for syllabizing everything, for giving to every section of a single study its separate local habitation and name. The same thing is to be observed in the teaching of English as a whole galaxy of subjects: Reading, Grammar, Recitation, Word-building and the rest. It is to be found again in the curious sense of impropriety which many teachers, especially young teachers, seem to experience at the introduction of any other 'subject' into a lesson on any given 'subject', Arithmetic into a History lesson, or Geography into a Literature lesson, for example. We have it in South Africa in the form of teaching South African History as a separate 'subject', perhaps a little more justifiable than the practice mentioned above, but still something that we are trying to moderate.

None of these evils of aimlessness and confusion and want of point are to be cured by any reiteration of formal 'aims'. We have had enough and to spare of them. Usually they serve no other purpose than as a concession to pedagogic respectability, like the aspidistra in the front parlour window. Behind them the wildest malpractices may go on with no reference to them whatever. And they are usually stated with a vagueness that deprives them even of the practical use they might otherwise have. What help, for instance, is

a struggling teacher to get from a statement given in a Report issued by the L.C.C. itself in 1911 and quoted in the present Report:

‘To train the mental powers of the child, by means of these powers to bring the child to the comprehension of a certain body of truth, and finally by means of this truth to develop in him some grains of political wisdom and some notion of civic duty.’

Apart from the excessive vagueness of this, and its suggestion of the now discredited doctrine of Formal Training, what meaning is to be attached to the term ‘political wisdom’, one of the few touches of definiteness in the misty cloud? Surely it is just such conceptions as that which need to be elaborated and defined in their relation to History teaching if they are to afford any guidance at all.

Here we approach the root of the matter. Our selection of material will certainly be determined by our idea of what we want to do with it—if, indeed, we have any such idea at all. But this, in turn, is determined by our view of what History itself is as a *form of knowledge of Arthur*. That is why we began this book with an attempt to sketch Arthur and his world, and followed it with an attempt to show what ‘knowledge’ must be taken to mean for Arthur—a system of complex and organized modes of response acquired through analysis of and action upon the content of his experience. It is a behaving Arthur in a present world that must ever be before us. What do we want ‘History’ to do for him and to be for him? And what *sort* of a thing is it that will attain the end in view?

We are convinced that the first step towards the clearing up the confusion consists in a resolute effort to grasp firmly what we mean to-day by Little Arthur's History. Once that is clear the 'aims' will be implicit in it and will not need much further definition.

Is that History anything other than just this life itself, the common civilized life of men in association, especially Western men, in which Arthur must learn to move about with an active and usable consciousness of whence it comes; of how it comes to be; of its many forms of activity reaching back in their several strands to a dim past which is, however, in a real sense, still present; of a Great Society whose life is the life of the Spirit, in Time but not of it? Social sense, indissolubly welded with historic sense; that is what we hope to achieve, and a History whose subject is nothing less than civilization as the developing life of men is the instrument for it.

We are told by one writer that 'the historical state of mind is opposed to originality of character'. We can see, perhaps, what he means, but what we have in such a case is a condition to be blamed not upon History and History teaching but upon original weakness of character. If Arthur is a weakling to begin with, he will readily use historical interpretation as a refuge against the labours and pains of enterprise and thinking for himself. He may then grow up to talk about 'historical necessity' as the justification for his actions and those of his nation when, if he were honest, he would say 'greed' or 'laziness'. Has the historical state of mind been possessed by any man in greater degree than by

Edmund Burke? But if he lacked originality of character, who has ever possessed it?

The truth is, of course, that if Arthur is not a weakling to begin with, the effect of History teaching in making him one with his tribe in past and present, conscious of himself as one of its centres of further growth and action, will be to strengthen confidence rather than to weaken it, to stimulate rather than to repress the spirit of enterprise. Was not the age of Elizabeth one of a very marked awakening of the historical mind? Was it then lacking in originality of character? There are writers of our own day who reveal in a strong degree the historical mind but who are hardly conspicuous examples of a timorous conservatism.

The idea that there is any connexion between the strong historic sense that we want to develop in Arthur and a weak refusal to face the future with spirit and originality may be dismissed, unless, indeed, we are to confuse dullness with steadiness. For History does steady, and helps to produce courage where we might have had only foolhardiness.

Failure to grasp such a conception of History as that we are insisting upon may explain a passage in the Board of Education Report already referred to. We are told that 'The child will not be interested in a lesson on the Divine Right of Kings; he can be interested in the dramatic story of Charles I'.

It is not easy to see how the dramatic quality of the story of Charles I can be intelligently brought out without a good deal of reference to the doctrine of

Divine Right. For was not that the real spring of his tragedy? But that by the way. Our present point can be indicated by the remark that Charles I is dead; the doctrine of Divine Right is not, though it assumes other forms to-day. And the ex-Kaiser is still alive in a world whose present sufferings are not unconnected with his belief in this very doctrine. Even liberal England is not free from examples of the same essential doctrine, though not, happily, in its application to Kingship. Has it, for instance, no connexion with the rejection only a day or two ago, of the proposed new Prayer-Book by the House of Commons?

Here, then, is a typical example of what we mean, a 'strand' of the past, a very long one, which thickened up considerably in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and is still with us to-day. The question whether Arthur can be interested in it and form any notion of it, is purely a question of how it is presented to him. We have no right whatever to prescribe for him beforehand by asserting roundly that he will not be interested. Some teachers could even go the length of guaranteeing that he should be!

In regard to this supremely important issue of the conception we form of the History that is to be Little Arthur's, there is another preliminary distinction that must be made clear. It is that between the training of the historian and the training of the common citizen. 'History' will not be quite the same in the two cases. The conflict between the two conceptions becomes acute sometimes at the University stage. But there are signs that it is not absent even at the stage of the



primary school. We have already thrown doubt on the possibility of a purely objective History. Even 'Science' is human science and subject to constant correction, and like History, what it teaches in one age is not what it teaches in another. Still, it is an ideal to get as near to the actual facts as we can, and that involves nowadays a highly specialized and technical training. Arthur's History will have very little concern with all this, though his teacher would be the better for knowing a little about it. We have no right, of course, to take liberties with 'facts' that are universally accepted. The teacher of History has not the rights of the plastic artist in this respect. Nevertheless, his ultimate business, in Little Arthur's case, is both with the facts and with the *interpretation* of them, and here both teacher and pupil are less historians than actual or potential citizens, themselves active centres of the spirit of whose manifestations they treat.

It is worth noting that, even among historians, a re-investigation of the 'facts' by strict scientific methods springs often from a strong desire to establish a new interpretation of them. Take, for example, the re-writing of the history of the Industrial Revolution that is now going on, and the new versions of Church History that continually appear. And why should the History of England and the Life of Christ be written afresh in every generation?

So we shall not bother Arthur overmuch with the conceptions and the apparatus of 'scientific' history, though we shall teach him to be respectful towards facts.

From this rather lengthy but necessary preliminary, let us now turn to look at some of the difficulties that face us in the practical field when we get down to the task of selecting material.

First of all there is Chronology. History deals with events in Time, and Chronology is a necessary determinant of the form of historical knowledge. The need for a time-map is fundamental and not to be denied. But accuracy of time-placing constitutes a much smaller element of the real value of History teaching than is often admitted. The truths of History are truths of human life and, in their most important aspect, are to be regarded as timeless. There are those who have quite a detailed knowledge of the dates and order of events of Greek History, but an all too inadequate grasp of what Greece is. (We say deliberately 'is', and not 'was'.) Moreover, if we stress Chronology, we shall be troubled by that awkward term 'event'. It would not be easy to say exactly what it should mean, but as used by the chronologists it suggests a kind of atomism which is in sharp conflict with the real unity of history and the way things happen. So we get a string of assorted beads rather than a continuum of complex though uniform texture. We might put it by saying that in the struggle to build up a Time-series, the much more profound idea of Duration entirely disappears. Yet it is Duration which, somehow or other, Arthur has to grasp.

And the beads themselves are not uniform but a hotch-potch assortment expressing in no rational way the interconnexions of life at any given age. The same

result arises from adopting a basis of reigns. What a medley the series of dates for Charles II's reign can be, for instance, comparable only to the curious jumble to be found in a medieval chronicle! If beads are to be in question at all, we must think of them as symbols, meant only to be suggestive of the real substance, nothing substantial in themselves.

A meticulous care for chronology need not, then, seriously trouble us in the selection of material for Little Arthur's History, though we shall not be teaching History if we ignore it entirely.

Another suggestion upon which emphasis is sometimes laid is that the principle of our selection must be that it be *representative*. There is truth in this, and we have ourselves already stressed the point. In the interests of the wholeness that is a fundamental consideration we can omit nothing that is of real importance in the general texture.

But care needs to be taken in the application of the principle lest it defeat the very object of preserving wholeness. The book by three collaborators that we have already mentioned affords an illustration. The authors have recognized the need for representativeness in choice of material, so far as human types are concerned, and they then proceed to argue that sufficient representative material for the purpose can be found within the limits of English History. They say:

'If we do not take Charles the Great, we shall tell of Alfred; if we leave out Socrates, we include Sir Thomas More; if we do not march with Alexander, we shall sail with

Sir Francis Drake. We can limit our wanderings in time and space without narrowing our outlook on the varieties of human endeavour.'

This may sound plausible enough to those for whom History is little more than a portrait gallery of representative men. But the spirit of it is fatal to the genuine teaching of the real History that Arthur should know. We can resist the temptation to question the parallels with which the authors illustrate their point. (Henry V, for instance, might be a better parallel for Alexander.) But the game, if amusing, is too profitless to be indulged in here. Our point is the more fundamental one that however close the parallel between two dreamers, Socrates and Sir Thomas More, one is Socrates who lived in Athens during the fifth century B.C., the other is Sir Thomas More who lived in England in the sixteenth century A.D. The parallel between them, such as it is, has some value for History no doubt. But the essence of History is concerned not so much with the personal parallel as with the whole social and intellectual environment of which each in his time and place was an expression. That is, the business of History is to see Socrates in his Athens, and Sir Thomas More in his London, not to detach the individuality of each from all that made it vital and then to compare the two in respect of some quality that may be quite accidental. Still less is it to study Sir Thomas More so as to persuade yourself that you then have something of Socrates.

But the illusion cuts even deeper in this instance. The representativeness here is of men, whereas it

should be of institutions and activities and forms of common life. Representative men have value, not in themselves, but as giving point and focus to such things; as Cromwell and Milton for Puritanism, St. Francis for Catholicism, and so on. The illustrations must be kept quite subordinate to the ultimate purpose.

When this is remembered the proposed limitation of choice to the field of English History is, of course, fatal. Our authors duly emphasize the importance of social history. But do they quite realize the many respects in which English social history is unique and hardly to be taken as typical? It is a common failing of Englishmen, noted much abroad, that they so often measure other peoples by the standards of their own island history and fail seriously to recognize the full and equal right to existence of other ways of life and other points of view. Yet is not even the sturdy Victorian faith in the universal validity of Parliamentary institutions of the British type now a little blown upon?

So we conclude that the representativeness we seek must be fully human and not merely English, and that it must be a representativeness of real historic types of life and society rather than of individual men detached from all that makes them historically significant.

The plea of 'No time for it', can be met by a considerable winnowing out of comparatively valueless material from the traditional school content of English History itself.

Another difficulty is suggested by the talismanic words 'Cause and Effect'. We have already suggested that the capacity of children to grasp and be interested

in Cause and Effect is greater than they are sometimes given credit for. But, in traditional History teaching, the notion has been too closely associated with the 'chain' idea of single successive events linked together, to have its proper value. The idea remains too much in its rudimentary childish form of a simple obvious A 'causing' a simple obvious B. Arthur gives Tom a shove and Tom falls. It is not till much later that Arthur learns of a universal force of gravitation that had a good deal to do with Tom's declension.

Yet history material must be chosen and handled so as to assist in refining and expanding this rudimentary idea of causation. Again we discover that the best material is that which concerns itself with the life of a whole age or with the life of a particular community at some particular stage of its history.

Take, for instance, that old stock question, the 'causes' of the Hundred Years' War. We ticked them off—one, two, three, four—and thought we had explained something. Yet many of us, apart from a vague notion that people in those days behaved rather oddly, had very little notion of that curious complex of feudalist ideas of right and law which was so much more the real cause. The real 'causes' of the war lay in the whole life of feudal Western Christendom, just as the causes of the Great War lay in the whole life of a régime of economic-imperialist-nationalism.

For another illustration take the recent Russian Revolution. What were its causes? For an answer you must take the whole life of the Russian people, and not say merely 'the genius of Lenin', or 'the weakness of

the 'Tsar'. Or again, the Boer War, as we now know, finds its 'causes' quite as much in the moral and intellectual condition of the English people at the end of the nineteenth century as in the racial and economic conflicts of South Africa.

The importance of communicating to the people of a democracy an adequate notion of historic causation should need no emphasis. And the process can be at least well begun if we begin the teaching of Arthur's History with analysis of his surrounding society as a whole so that he can begin to see 'How Things Happen'; if we trace back the strands and examine at selected points the cross-sections as already suggested; and if we take constant care to bring the teaching back to the present, where it began. It is not suggested, of course, that Arthur could ever as a primary school-boy have a sufficient grasp of the quality of medieval society really to *understand* the Hundred Years' War (if indeed we trouble about it at all). What is suggested is that some general teaching about the life of medieval society will help him much more than the usual formal recitation of 'causes'. Similarly, some knowledge of the world that is revealed in Langland's *Piers Plowman* is a far better help to the understanding of the causes of Tyler's Revolt than the point by point 'causes' that are commonly taught.

There can be no better example of the consequences of the 'chain of events' conception than the still reiterated assertion that the Renaissance 'began' in 1453 with the capture of Constantinople by the Turks. Could there be any better evidence of complete ignorance of what the Renaissance really was? History

with 'causation' such as this is uncommonly like a dull vaudeville show—a bell rings and the next turn comes on, carefully contrasted with the previous one.

Other troubles and difficulties in selection arise largely from convention and the tyranny of the books. Thus a great deal of the usual stuff of medieval history might well be dispensed with. (The Battle of Crécy is of no real importance except as an illustration of the use of archery.) In its place should be taken an account of selected aspects of medieval life—the baronial hall; the manorial system with its open-field culture; the monastery; the Universities (a strangely neglected topic); the town-gilds, and so on. Any one of these is infinitely more valuable as a matter for permanent knowledge than the story of the Hundred Years' War. A similar purge, with similar substitution, should be effected over the whole range of English History, especially in the period 55 B.C. to A.D. 1066.

A somewhat similar difficulty arises from what we believe is mistaken psychology. Melodramatic stories like those of the White Ship, the Murder of Becket, the Little Princes in the Tower, well enough as stories perhaps, waste a good deal of the valuable time of the History lesson. Of what *use* are they; historically we mean? And how much far more valuable material their inclusion keeps out! The plea that children like them, if they do, is not enough. They like many things that we have no time for in school. Many of such stories owe their very existence to the comparative accident of the occurrence of a lengthy recital of them in some chronicle or other.



Perhaps greatest difficulty of all arises from the necessity of giving Little Arthur a coherent and usable notion of the history of his own country. The danger here is, of course, distortion of perspective on the one hand—if such history is over-emphasized—and want of focus on the other hand, if it is under-emphasized. The difficulty need not be so great if the teacher will start from the idea of the human story as a whole with Arthur and Arthur's England as its centre. An account of Rome will bring Caesar to Britain: a survey of the state of Western Europe after the decline of Rome will bring first the Angles and Saxons, then Christianity, then the Danes, and finally the Normans to an England which is now becoming England. Some account of feudal society will cover much medieval history of England as of Europe. So on throughout, England becoming, perhaps, more focal as we approach the present. Even historically that would be correct, for English commercial and industrial development led the world onward to the economic and social condition in which it finds itself to-day.

So the narrative would move back and forth, demanding some ingenuity from the teacher in framing his scheme (probably over two or three years) and some liberty of action in turning aside to follow a thread where he felt it necessary. But always the background would be the great changes and movements and phases, with the national history shown in relief against them.

No doubt the thing may be called impossible until it is successfully done. May it be suggested that England has a special duty to try to do it? Her island-home has

given to her history unity, continuity, and individuality such as few countries can show. At the same time her situation within Western Christendom has knit up her life and her destiny, and, we may add, the give-and-take of her inventiveness, with those of Western Europe in a peculiarly intimate way. Is any country better equipped or under a stronger obligation to reveal the happy harmony of the One and the Many, the National with the Universal?

We can now sum up quite briefly one or two principles of guidance which may help the harassed teacher in the selection of material. For it is no part of the purpose of this book, by offering any ready-made schemes, to do for the teacher what he should do for himself.

Of the first and chief principle, *Wholeness*, enough has been said.

The next principle is *Nearness*, not, of course, nearness in time, but nearness in interest, and in analogy with, and application to, the present. Greece is nearer to us in this sense than is the Middle Ages, and, oddly enough, France is even nearer than England at times! If the teacher, when he is selecting material, will always ask himself, 'Is this *near* enough?' that is, 'Has it sufficient direct bearing upon Arthur's present life and situation?' he will find his History syllabus disembarrassed of a good deal of useless lumber.

The principle has already been elaborated in other forms, so need not be laboured further.

Finally there is *suitability*, meaning thereby that possible material may be legitimately included from the

point of view of the criteria of Wholeness and Nearness, but is not suitable as teaching material for Arthur at his present stage of ability and knowledge. The Murder of Becket, indeed, does not fulfil either of the first two conditions. But it is mentioned here as an example of material that does not fulfil the third. For the underlying causes of the quarrel with Henry—conflicting views about Investiture and the whole theory of the relation of the secular to the spiritual power—are far beyond Arthur's comprehension.

The chief danger in the use of the third criterion is to use it alone, unchecked by the other two. Hence a considerable store of matter in the syllabus which is there only because it *can* be taught to Arthur, the question being insufficiently examined whether it *ought* to be taught.

## VII

### WAR, DOMINION AND TRUSTEESHIP

So far it has been argued that the task of teaching 'History' to Little Arthur in the primary school is mainly that of taking the first steps to endow him with the power of seeing the present as a living past, of awakening him to the significances of familiar phenomena in his own social surroundings, and of establishing and enriching his sense of these significances by under-pinning them, as it were, with History. We have seen also that this involves both selection and organization of the best material.

But we have noted, further, that, in respect of such material, it is not enough to ask, '*Can* it be taught?' We have also to ask, '*Ought* it to be taught?' That is, the test is not only that of Intelligibility, but also that of Relevance—relevance to Arthur's own more obvious needs.

So it may be well, at this stage, to interpolate a chapter by way of illustration of the working of our principle. The three associated topics mentioned in the chapter-heading all represent very live issues in the world for participation in which Arthur is preparing; they all have a significant and illuminating history; and they all prove, upon examination, to be capable of interpretation historically in the light of one great idea.

Moreover, it will not be unnoticed that they cover very well the field of action in which the League of Nations has been designed to work. In them we have,

as it were, focus points of the modern world-conscience, central hard cores around which much of the best thought and effort in the world are being organized. A Little Arthur who is young to-day may live to see a much changed and much better world in consequence.

There can be no doubt, then, that from the point of view of significance, these topics may well be regarded as typical. From the point of view of Intelligibility, however, the matter is much less clear. True, in the ordinary primary school course, all three topics figure in some form or other. Of war there is usually enough and to spare in the History course; of Dominions Arthur hears a good deal in his Geography lessons, if not so much in his History; and of Trusteeship something is usually said, often in relation to such countries as India, or Egypt, or East Africa, or to the Mandate System of the League of Nations.

But it still remains doubtful whether all that Arthur hears on these matters is as intelligible to him as we could hope; whether from it he really does get that light to guide his feet which should be the product of all live teaching.

To begin with, none of the three topics is conspicuously 'near' in the sense in which we have defined the term. The Little Arthurs of a few years ago were, in many cases, all too close to war. But those days have passed and there is a new generation in the primary schools. War has influenced their lives, too, pretty deeply, but it is not very easy to show them how. Perhaps the most obvious point of contact is to be found in the battleship, the submarine, and the tank, and such-like

mechanical monsters of modern warfare. Every normal boy is interested enough in such mechanisms, and good pictures and diagrams are to be had in plenty. These are, however, only a starting-point. The line of teaching along which Arthur is to be led from them is a matter of high importance and considerable difficulty, to which we shall return presently.

Of significant contact with the Dominions the average stay-at-home English boy has very little. The value of Empire Day pageants and similar ceremonials can easily be exaggerated. Indeed, they may come to have an actual *dis*value by inducing an attitude of vainglorious pride where there should be the beginnings of sympathetic understanding. From some of them one might expect the boy to derive an impression that in some mysterious way he *owns* the Canadian, the Australian, and the South African. The Dominions 'belong' to England and he is taught to take pride in her great 'possessions'. Few things are more exasperating to the Dominion citizen than the consequences of such an attitude, and it is not surprising that, at times, he asserts himself pretty vigorously against it.

A more genuine and fruitful point of contact is to be found often enough among Arthur's own relatives and ancestry. Letters and newspapers from friends in the Dominions might start the train going, no doubt along a more mundane and less flamboyant track than that which sets out from an Empire pageant, but with far more of the stuff of use and reality in it.

More generally the points of contact are to be found through the Geography lesson than through the History

lesson. The boy should know something of what Canada is to-day before he hears much about the early settlement and the exploits of Wolfe. Commodities produced in the Dominions and playing some part in Arthur's life suggest points of contact of a very concrete kind. He may be writing in an exercise-book made of paper from Canada, wearing clothes made from Australian wool, eating bread made of Canadian flour, and, if he is fortunate, may have had an occasional taste of South African fruit.

The principle involved is always the same, and cannot be reiterated too often. Look in the texture of Arthur's present life for the points of contact out of which to develop historical knowledge.

Still more remote from Arthur's life to-day is another set of facts out of which much will develop to influence his life in the future; those facts of European contact with primitive and backward peoples that have given rise to the characteristic modern doctrines of Trusteeship.

English democracy is soon to be faced with the responsibility of a great decision, comparable to that which had to be made nearly a century ago when Lord Durham's famous Report on Canada set going the great development of Colonial and Dominion self-government. Economic exploitation of the world, itself directly connected with rising standards of comfort among the more civilized peoples, is bringing to an issue a sharp conflict between the material interests and the human conscience of the modern civilized man. How can he engage the services of primitive peoples to

minister to his needs and ends in such a way that they will also minister to their own, and be the better for it? Hence arises the doctrine that has been called by Lord Lugard the 'Dual Mandate'. The white man goes, say, to Africa, to execute a double commission; that of winning Africa and African products for the uses of civilization, and, at the same time, that of exercising benevolent tutelage over the native peoples so that they, too, may advance in the ways of well-being and the good life.

The issue has now been raised in direct practical form by the Report of the Hilton-Young Commission on the Government of East African Territories. Discussions that have ensued upon the publication of the Report show how acute the conflict between material interest and public conscience may be.

Much the same question arises in regard to the relation of Britain to India, to Egypt, and even to China. The life of Britain and, indeed, of Europe generally, must be increasingly influenced by the reaction of contacts with primitive peoples, and peoples not of the family of Western Civilization.

Upon the democracy of Britain there must fall, before very long, the responsibility of a momentous decision, and it cannot be asserted with any confidence that that democracy is sufficiently instructed as yet to decide wisely and with fullness of knowledge.

Hence, remote as the issue may appear to be from Arthur's present life, some point of contact with it must be found if the teaching of History to the British boy is to fill adequately its function of adjusting the sub-



stance and set of his mind to the issues of his own time. Again we suggest that some communicating channel of actuality is to be found in commodities of daily use, commodities derived by the labour of the peoples to whom, it is claimed, the relation of 'Trusteeship' should apply. Cocoa, rubber, coffee, rice, cotton, and the democratic pea-nut are examples.

Arthur's stock of History lore would gain in relevancy and practical point if it included a melancholy story or two about the earlier methods of exploitation by which the white man sought these products. These might fit in very well with similar stories of the exploitation of child-labour in the mines and factories of Britain during the earlier part of the nineteenth century, and useful parallels could be drawn between the awakening of social conscience in the one case and in the other.

So far we have considered the three topics mainly from the standpoint of Intelligibility. Let us look at them now a little more closely from the standpoint of Significance.

We note at once that they form a connected group. Dominion has arisen largely as an issue of war, and Trusteeship has arisen out of the necessities of Dominion under the influence of a more sensitive social conscience. But the collocation of the three topics has a deeper significance even than that. 'The great self-governing lands that we call distinctively the 'Dominions'', though War may have led to the acquisition of them, express in their growth to maturity a definite movement away from War, and in the direction of the ideas that form the animating motive of Trusteeship.

Earlier ideas of British Sovereignty were incompatible with colonial aspirations to autonomy. Sovereignty was absolute, single, and indivisible, and the assertion of anything that looked like sovereign powers by a subject people could only mean rebellion, and, if persisted in, War. So it turned out in the case of the American Colonies. War was appealed to as the instrument of Dominion, and we know the result.

The lesson was not learned, and some sixty years later war of the same kind was imminent in Canada. It was averted by an experiment that was also a discovery; the discovery that with a reasonable people, of sufficient intelligence and goodwill, 'Trust and the recognition of Right, might be far more effective instruments of Dominion than violence and war. So the Dominion of Canada was born and the triumphant vindication of ancient and deep-seated British principles makes the last hundred years of Imperial history a veritable pageant of Liberty.

Now we are discovering that the application of the same principles cannot be limited to men of our own race and colour. There is a universal element in them which proves them akin to the fundamental doctrines of Christianity itself, where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither bond nor free. Logically, and, it may prove, practically also, we can set no limit to them. But since backward and uninstructed peoples must undergo long preparation before they can be ready to exercise the trust for themselves, there arises the doctrine of Trusteeship. The essence of it is the contemplation of, and preparation for, a future in which the controlling

hand of external Dominion will no longer be needed. The East African Report may be compared with the Durham Report as again embodying an experiment and a discovery of a closely similar kind. It is not so long ago that the instruments of Dominion over primitive peoples were war, subjection, and exploitation. But the inherent contradiction in such a situation was bound to reveal itself in a world developing as ours has done, and so the new ideas have supervened.

What is the real significance of all this development of ideas and practice? Surely the core of it is to be found in the slow but sure overcoming of the idea of Force by the idea of Right. Looked at from this angle, the League of Nations, with all the ideals that animate it, will not be regarded as no more than a by-product of the Great War. It is rather the perfectly natural issue of more than a century of developing ideas and practice, accelerated indeed by the Great War, but in no sense the exclusive product of it.

Little Arthur's History, even at the primary stage, will be gravely lacking in point and relevancy unless it makes him aware of this vast and far-reaching change which has been going on for so long and is still in progress all about him. For he will be lost and rudderless in the world of manhood to the extent that he is ignorant of all this.

How, then, shall we present it to him at these early stages? How shall we initiate him through his History-teaching, into a way of thought about human affairs which he will find more and more influential in the world to which he is growing up? There are formidable

obstacles to surmount, and the victory of the new ideas is by no means won, but their steady advance is perhaps the biggest thing in the world that the boy will some day have to know. One might compare it to the advance of Christianity in the Roman Empire or to the spread of science and of scientific habits of thought following upon the Renaissance.

The remainder of this chapter may well be devoted to some discussion of ways and means by which History teaching in the primary school may be enabled to take account of so momentous a movement.

The essence of it, we have seen, is the steady super-vening of the idea of Right over that of Interest. The appeal is to a just and ordered determination of interests, and away from the violent and anarchical assertion by an Interest, not of its rights but of its whole claims.

In much that we tell Arthur about the internal history of his own country there will be opportunity for incidental emphasis on the idea. Thus he might be spared much of the usual unessential detail about medieval kings in order to hear something about the long and toilsome process through which the 'King's Peace' came to be accepted by a harassed populace as the necessary alternative to spoliation by factious and lawless barons. He will hear how the seamen of London ceased to regard the seamen of Newcastle or Southampton as 'foreigners'; how the principle was established that a man is to be judged by his peers, and that no man is entitled to take the execution of the law out of the hands of the appointed authority; how effect

was gradually given to the maxim that what concerns all must be attended to by all; how even the privilege of a powerful Church and clergy was made amenable to the law of the land; and how the whole life of the people, clerical and lay, noble and commoner, merchant and peasant, was welded into one under a single Common Law. In later history he will be shown the real service that Henry VIII did in the midst of all his excesses and brutalities; he will be helped to see why the Stuarts, though they had law on their side, were overthrown because their policy was contrary to the idea of a Commonwealth, now firmly rooted in the English mind; and he will get some elementary notions of responsible government. When he comes to the nineteenth century he will be shown the operation of the same ceaseless search for the establishment of principles of Right, now in the social sphere, as privilege falls away. The franchise is extended, freedom of combination is conceded, and the first steps towards national education are taken.

The old-fashioned type of teacher will protest that all this is 'constitutional' history, much too difficult for Little Arthur. If so, then there can be no sense in trying to give Arthur any teaching about the League of Nations or the forces that are at work in the world at large to-day. For without some conception of what is meant by the Reign of Law the whole subject must remain quite unintelligible, however great the mass of detailed information about the League that may be memorized. And where shall he get such a conception if not from the life of his own country, both in its

operation all around him and in the long centuries of struggle and accumulating habit through which the great conception has been arrived at?

Indeed, the more we think of the matter, the more do we realize how fundamental is this notion of the Reign of Law among the equipment that Little Arthur must take into the world with him as the result of the history he is taught. Once he is on the way to grasp that, as far as he is able, then we have the means of enabling him to take a right attitude towards War, a feature of human history that is prominent enough in history books. For War springs from that desire to be judge and executioner in one's own cause against which the Reign of Law is the painfully evolved guarantee. It is the forcible assertion of the *will* of one of the parties in the absence of a common judge accepted by both to decide the question of *right* between them. The contrast is that between the State of Nature in the Hobbesian sense, and the State of Law as the English Common Law understands it. All the glamour of actual warfare and all the solemn rituals of the diplomats should not hide the dominating fact of the essential *lawlessness* of War. It is that that the Little Arthurs of the future must be made to grasp beyond all chance of forgetting.

There is evidently much searching of hearts among teachers to-day on this very question. A writer in the *Times Educational Supplement* of May 11, 1929, essays the task of affording guidance to these troubled spirits, and illustrates, in doing so, what may follow from attributing a false objectivity to history, and from the

adoption of criteria other than the actual needs of the pupil who is being taught.

When he says:

‘Life is a bigger thing than even the most prolonged war, and history must not be deflected from its legitimate course either by the piety, the passions, or the perversity of men under the stress of emotion:’

he is saying what may be true but his meaning is by no means clear. What is the ‘legitimate course’ of history? Who has imposed a law upon it which can be violated by men under the stress of emotion? And what is the ‘history’ whose legitimate course may be deflected? It can hardly be the actual course of events in the past, for the moving finger has written, and not all our tears can wash out one word of it. Nor can it be the course of events in the present, for that is constantly being affected (if not deflected) by the actions of men under the stress of emotion.

Apparently it is not any course of events at all that piety or passion may ‘deflect’ but rather our *ex post facto* interpretation of events. So the expression ‘legitimate course’ seems to apply to one single standard, or ‘true’ interpretation, all others being the result of some illegitimate ‘deflection’ of it.

That this is so appears to be the case from what follows a little later:

‘History is a record of all man’s doings, and we must face the fact honestly that the major portion of these doings relate to war. The amount of time, forethought, expense and energy which has gone to the erection of fortifications of one sort or another, with instruments for their subsequent

defence or destruction, far outweighs human expenditure for any other end.'

Was there ever a more amazing statement! A moment's reflection reveals the absurdity of it, for, were it true, mankind would have destroyed itself long ago. Apparently the writer has himself allowed some perversity or other (or perhaps some imagined 'piety' towards objective truth) to deflect the legitimate course of history.

Even were the statement true, it does not answer at all the real question at issue. No teacher in his senses will teach history with war eliminated or even minimized, and that not so much because the pageantry of war 'appeals' to pupils (a poor justification when you come to think of it), but just because war really has been a potent force in history. The supposed disposition of teachers knowingly to misrepresent the actual historic fact is almost wholly a fiction.

The real issue is that of *interpretation*. What, as a result of our teaching, is going to be Arthur's settled view about war in general? For, do what we will, our teaching, if it has any effect at all, will point to some view about it. *The Times* writer gives no explicit view, but from his general treatment one would gather that because war has been a great fact in history it will continue to be a great fact in the future. History taught with that kind of hopeless 'objectivity' can be a deadly thing, the seed-plot of a smug cynicism that is poison to all honest endeavour.

The analogy of religious persecution should help us here. Of course we must tell the story honestly and



plainly, and teachers generally do so. But are we to leave it there? Should we not ask the crucial question: 'Why do not such things happen nowadays?' And then we shall be led on to show how the sheer unbearableness of religious conflict pursued to the death, forced men in general to substitute the doctrine of Right for the impulse to assert the group-interest at all costs. So we get mutual tolerance on the basis of Right and under the Reign of Law.

Those who argue that a closely similar development can never take place in regard to war—an institution springing from the same roots in human frailty as religious persecution—assume the heavy responsibility of explaining how it could have come about in this latter case.

We claim that there can be no sounder foundation for what we shall have to say to Arthur about the League of Nations than an interpretation of history—simple, no doubt, but none the less clear and direct—which reveals the steady advance of the *idea* of Common Right over the *passion* of Group Violence. That, indeed, should be our reading of the oft-quoted but often misinterpreted: 'Patriotism is not enough'. And where is there a better field from which to deduce, and in which to apply, such an interpretation than that of warfare in history? By so doing we shall not necessarily rob war of its glamour. But to exhibit only the glamour is again seriously to deflect the legitimate course of history. As for the heroisms and endurances and all that has been described as the 'Redemption of War', we shall make all we can of that, only remembering that

honesty still requires us to recognize similar opportunities in any and every form of trial and calamity. The martyr at the stake and the heroic people in the railway accident of the day before yesterday tell the same human story, probably with a little less of the self-deception that is too often associated with talk about the heroisms of war.

Once this key-interpretation has been fixed, mainly in our talks about warfare in history, the right line of teaching on the other two topics, Dominion and Trusteeship, opens out with perfect clearness.

As regards the Dominions *eo nomine*, the wise teacher will probably go on to say something about them immediately after he has worked over the story of the War of American Independence. His teaching will acquire a greater weight of significance if he goes about it that way.

The idea of Right was by no means absent from the American conflict. But ways and means for the peaceful vindication of it were not yet clear to the minds of leaders on either side, and so war and complete separation ensued.

That, however, was no settlement: war of itself never is. So the trouble cropped up again sixty years later, in Canada, with a very different result. Why? Not because men had now a stronger passion for Right, but because they were more intelligent and better-informed as to ways and means of guaranteeing it.

Here is the pivot around which the telling of the story of the Dominions should turn, and here, if Arthur is wisely taught, he will find one of the surest vindications

of the greatness of his race. For no people has shown greater ingenuity and resource in devising expedients for the peaceful assertion and maintenance of Right.

It may be well to add a few suggestions about the form and manner in which the highly important history of the Dominions should enter into the primary school course.

In the first place the plea of an overcrowded syllabus should have no weight here. Room could easily be found by ejecting Boadicea, much of the history of early Saxondom, and those stories of Becket and others that might well be laid to rest for a time.

Further, the teaching should be continuous. A whole term or more towards the end of the school course might be devoted to it. Starting, as we have suggested, with the American War of Independence, it could traverse the main ground of the rise of the great Dominions, and if it ended with a slight sketch of the history of the United States, so much the better.

Too often in primary school courses the real meat of the story of the Dominions is left out of the dish. Take Canada, for instance. Every schoolboy hears about the exploits of Wolfe, and then, leaving him on the Plains of Abraham, does not think of Canada again till he discusses modern Canada in the geography lesson. But the really illuminating and decisive history of Canada falls within the years that intervene between the American War and the Durham Report, and few boys at the primary school hear anything about that.

Difficulties arising from masses of detail can easily be avoided if it is always remembered that the purpose

of the teaching is to reveal, very simply and broadly, the working out of a great idea by Arthur's own kindred. Details will then be needed only as illustrative pointers.

It is the *fruitfulness* of the idea that should be impressed upon Arthur: the freedom, the peace, the expansion, and the wide range of well-being to which it has led. If thus he comes to realize that the name 'Canada' points to far more that Englishmen may be proud of than just the military achievements of Wolfe, the teaching will have attained its object.

Geography lessons will help to fix the leading idea and fill out its content with rich, concrete, human substance.

Perhaps it is mainly through geography rather than through history lessons that Arthur can be given some notion of the form which the same fundamental idea, applied to new circumstances, is now assuming—that of Trusteeship. A discussion of the products of tropical Africa may well open out into a consideration of the whole question, and this should be closely linked with what has already been taught about War and Dominion.

This is hardly the place to enter into detail, but two general remarks can be made.

The first has to do with an element of unsatisfactoriness in the term Trusteeship itself. It does not fairly describe the relationship between white and black, and arrogates to the white man a disinterestedness which he does not really claim and would not attempt to justify. For the essence of the part of a trustee is that he makes no profit for himself out of his trust. If he does he is

quite rightly charged with malversation. But the white man does make profits through the labour of the native, and is there with all the panoply of Government largely for that purpose. The word 'Partnership' would be a much better term, though even this is not quite unexceptionable.

The mention of Partnership suggests the second remark. Through some discussion of it, of its terms, and of the enormous difficulties to which it gives rise, Arthur can be given some glimpse of a vast issue which will play an ever-increasing part in his own life and times. It is that of what has been called the Clash of Colour. Those whose whole lives are lived in England are apt to underestimate the importance of imbuing the mind of English democracy with sound ideas on this question. If its understanding of an extraordinarily complex and far-reaching issue goes no farther than a vague sentiment that the black man ought to be kindly treated and that he should be 'allowed to live his own life', the way is open for colossal and costly mistakes. The real truth is, as we have suggested, that in the new set of problems that are indicated by the word Trusteeship we have the same idea of Right that has already been discussed—the idea of the Commonwealth if you like—trying to work itself out upon exceedingly difficult and intractable material. It has shown itself capable of transcending the barriers of race and language and religion and distance. Can it also transcend that of Colour?

The question is wholly unanswered as yet. But if it cannot be answered in the affirmative, then we shall have

to say that the animating idea which permeates British history, overcoming greater and yet greater obstacles, has reached its limit. For this reason alone, if for no other, the Little Arthurs who will have the great decisions in their hands in the years to come might hear a little about it, though in the simplest form, before they leave school.

In conclusion it may be repeated that the main purpose of this chapter has been to illustrate, by reference to specially significant material, the thesis of preceding chapters. It is that all the sequences that we follow up in teaching Little Arthur history issue from his present world, and the aim of the teaching is always the same—to fill his present world with the maximum degree of *significance*. It should not be necessary to emphasize further the effect on the vitality and permanence of Arthur's learning of a realization of this fact by the teacher. For those worrying, crowding, bewildering details can all now be reduced to their proper subordination, when once an effective criterion of *living meaning* has been found and brought into play.

## VIII

### TIME AND TIME-SENSE

WE have now outlined that conception of History which, we are convinced, should govern the teaching of the subject at the Primary School stage. We have given some indication of its spirit and outlook; have sketched out the range over which its vision should reach; and have offered some suggestions towards the organization and treatment of its content.

We go on to consider a number of topics which are concerned mainly with methods of teaching. Here again, at the risk of being mistaken, the treatment will have to be somewhat critical, for nothing is more essential at the moment than the stimulation of a sceptical attitude towards prevailing orthodoxies.

We will consider first the important business of training in children a Time-sense sufficiently sure and comprehensive to be of real value as an instrument for the interpretation and organization of History. As we do so, we may see reason for believing that in our ideas about Time, and especially in our ideas about what we can do with children's understanding of it, there is a large element of illusion. For, actually, the notion of Time is a most difficult and elusive conception and we must guard against the too ready assumption that either we or our pupils have a really adequate grasp of it.

It is easy to say that History is concerned with a development in Time, and that, therefore, a conception of

Time must form, as it were, a *dimension* of our knowledge of it. That is perfectly true, but it is also easy to assume that we grasp Time more completely than is actually the case.

In the first place our notions of Time, as Bergson has so insistently emphasized, *will* express themselves in forms of space. Time is itself measurement, and as a standard we are forced to conceive of an object moving at uniform speed over marked intervals of space, like the hand of a clock round the dial. Similarly, in the historical sense:

The moving finger writes, and, having writ,  
Moves on.

The prepositions 'before' and 'after' apply indifferently to Time and Space, as also does the notion of 'intervals'. The same 'conversion' of Time into Space is shown in the idea of longitude (where the sun is now the moving object that measures). It is surprising to find how puzzled the average ship's passenger still is at the putting back of the clock as the ship moves westward.

Sometimes the emphasis is the other way about, where it is found convenient to measure Space in terms of Time. A few years ago if you had asked at any country place in South Africa how far it was to some other place, you would have been answered in hours: six hours, eight hours, or whatever it was. The standard was the capacity of a Cape cart and pair of horses; six miles an hour over the rough roads. The motor-car is, apparently, too inconstant for the practice to persist as applied to it. Similarly a 'knot' as a measure-



ment of a ship's speed is not a distance, but a unit distance per hour—a unit of speed.

Such reflections may suggest doubts of the purity of our notions of historic Time, that they are much infected with space, and that the capacity to construct a Time-map may be no proof of the possession of an adequate Time-sense.

It may be also, that we exaggerate unduly the aspect of Time itself, the notion of a serial order. The point may be illustrated by a further reference to the important matter of Cause and Effect. It is natural to think of the effect as subsequent in time to the cause. So, in a sense, it may be. The bad morning is the morning *after* the night before. But, actually, an effect persists only so long as the cause persists, if we take 'cause' in a more adequate sense. For if you take the *whole* cause, you find the effect in it; indeed, you find it *is* the effect. When the life is out the man is dead. The causes are in the same total situation with the effect and you must know the total situation if you are to know either. Of course, it is of the essence of historical situations to change, and the changes have to be traced. But it is a *whole* that is changing, 'causes' as well as 'effects'; there is no defined phase of causes first, followed by one of effects. The French Revolution may well be taken as an example.

Emphasis on serial order—the string of beads—leads to such misuse of the notion of causation as a Renaissance 'caused' by the Turks' capture of Constantinople.

The Great War was not 'caused' by the murder of the Archduke Charles at Serajevo. It was itself just a *change*

as a whole, in a total situation as a whole. Change and Time are not quite the same thing, and it is upon Change that the emphasis must fall.

Again, by insistence upon the spatial-serial interpretation of Time we tend to exclude, as Bergson has pointed out, the much more fundamental notion of Duration. And yet it is Duration that the Little Arthurs of democracy will have to understand and feel if they are to master impatience and grasp the case for tolerance. Biology, and the spread of biological ideas, as Bergson saw, can help us a good deal here. But biology is concerned with Life, and Life inheres in an organism which is a unity, a whole. History is the story of a Life, the Life of the race itself, and we have to understand that organically also, as the continuous perduring life of one thing. Once again, then, we come upon *wholeness* of treatment as one of the guarantees of a feeling of Duration. Little Arthur has to be something of a philosopher after all! We shall see later how by looking at phenomena in their Time-aspect, *in the present*, we may get a much better grasp of the essential Duration than by the method of the Time-scale and the Line of Time.

Our methods of dealing with the Time-notion in the teaching of History too often suggest a *staccato* conception of the growth and order of things that is fatal to any real grasp of historic continuity.

The Time-scale is, after all, only a rough map, usually in one dimension. We need it to keep us straight, but its value depends upon our power to interpret it, to fill in its intervals with a living continuum of persistence

and duration. We can read from the map, perhaps with some slight shock, that 1066 is 'nearer' to 1927 than it is to 55 B.C. But that does not mean much until we have filled the interval 55 B.C. to A.D. 1066 with its proper continuum, and that is more than Little Arthur can ever hope to do. The Time-scale fails badly to bring out what may be called differences of *intensity* in History. A whole century lying between 55 B.C. and A.D. 1066 may be less, measured by significant events (significant for our present purpose, that is), than a few years of the French Revolutionary Era.

Our point about the filling of the Time-interval with significant material in order to appreciate both its substance and its continuity, may be illustrated by the analogy of space. A distance of 6,000 miles is easily talked about, and you can work quite a number of sums bearing upon it. But travel the distance, and how much more it means! Continuity becomes so overwhelming and oppressive that you exhaust all your resources to break it up a little. The parallel is more than a parallel really, for Time is of the essence of it. Go by aeroplane and you will still have continuity, but somewhat differently.

It may be surmised that many of the exercises in Time-sense which are given in History teaching are little more than exercises in Arithmetic, chiefly subtraction. When we require children to subtract 1649 from 1927 and to say that Charles I was executed 278 years ago, we must not deceive ourselves into believing that we are doing more than is actually the case.

Perhaps a more fruitful mode of approach to the handling of the problem may be found if we take the fact of Time as Arthur actually experiences it. For we have insisted throughout that Arthur's world of actual experience is at once the focus and the point of departure of all the teaching. What notions do we form of Time as we actually experience it ?

One advantage of this procedure suggests itself at once. Duration is more likely to be appreciated by living on in the present than by contemplation of a very dimly realized and artificially cut-up past. Arthur's own personality is the nearest and best example, the same, yet a different Arthur from day to day.

But when we come to apply our actual life-experience of Time and Time-intervals to the interpretation of History, we find difficulties. Life is short, and Methuselah had obvious advantages in this regard. Perhaps even more serious is the strong element of subjectivity and therefore of variableness in our own personal time-measures. Compare those 'hours' that we experience when we wait fidgetily for five minutes for a wife who has gone into the draper's, with the brilliant brevity of one of these five-minute speeches for which we are famous.

Moreover, the difference between adult and childish measures is notorious:

The more we live more brief appear  
Our life's succeeding stages;  
A day to childhood seems a year,  
A year like passing ages.

Perhaps, even of the sheer lapse of bare Time, few of

us have any clear notion. The results of an experiment on the point might prove interesting, say, to sit absolutely still with no objective means of marking the movement of time and then to be required to signal when we thought that ten minutes had elapsed.

There seems to be little security here, little hope for a firm basis upon which to build a sure notion of Time.

Even in building up the Time-scale of our own lives, in locating its events in serial order, we experience untold difficulties, as every autobiographer knows. Memories do not date themselves automatically, though they are none the less potent in our lives for that, a fact which we often forget when we come to deal with the parallel case of dates in History. What the autobiographer does is what the teacher of History will also do if he is wise, he will care more for unity and coherence of exposition, and for a true account of real causes and forces, than for excessive meticulousness in the serial order of the details. History, like autobiography, might be quite precisely correct in its time-ordering of details and yet glaringly false from the standpoint of any adequate criterion of truth. In other words, the problem that both have to solve is much more one of selection and emphasis than of accurate chronicling.

In school the use of dates is often strongly suggestive of the use of telephone numbers. You can ring up William the Conqueror at 1066 and Julius Caesar at 55 B.C. The date is often little more than a nominal label attached to what is itself little more than a name.

The number 1066 adheres to William the Conqueror as a number-plate adheres to a seat in a theatre. We have said very little about the Norman invasion when we have said no more than '1066'. We 'date' the invasion much more effectively if, again, we construct a *whole*. The invasion was one of the last moves of the migrations of the Northmen, it brought the French language, and improvements in Romanesque architecture, it coincided with the reorganization of the Church as a force in the West, and so on.

Similarly, it is little to say that Van Riebeeck founded Capetown in 1652. It is much more to say that he came from a Holland where the Protestant Reformation had fully triumphed, where Rembrandt was painting, where a commercial war with Cromwellian England was brewing, where scientific investigation was proceeding apace, and so on.

The best kind of dating is that of the cross-sections described in Chapter V. For in that we have again *wholeness*, a texture instead of a string. A few supporting dates for each section will be sufficient for the purpose.

Personal experience of the actual lapse of time does not, then, give us all the help that we should like to have.

But there is a further alternative. The possibilities of direct experience are not exhausted by deliberate attempts to estimate the lapse of time by our own personal standards. The fact of Time enters into our experience in a profounder way, and in a way that is almost intuitively perceived. Moreover, in this sense

Time is grasped with a wholeness and a substantial continuity such as no mere line of Time or subjective estimating of time-intervals can ever effect. Let us take an example.

Arthur sees a man and calls him 'old'. What does he mean? He is conscious of no precise act of time-measurement, he is not even thinking primarily of time at all, but of the 'old' man before him, an experience which has wholeness and significance. Surely what Arthur is here really aware of is a Living Past, of one who has lived long and seen and done many things, which, somehow or other, are still with him and in him. Sir Walter Scott was following a sound instinct when he called his child's history book, *Tales of a Grandfather*. The very name Grandfather is richly suggestive of Time, of Time organic, living, and talking, in a human *whole*. Is not Time itself personified as a grandfather, though our melancholy human fate is to find Time also ever-young, constantly renewing its youth, so that we outgrow it?

Grandfather, then, is Time come alive as it were, a Past which is yet not a Past for it is here and now, expressing itself in the present.

An ancient building—especially if it is still in use—or an ancient city, can express the same thing. 'If those walls could speak,' we say. Of course, they do speak to those who have ears to hear and one of our high functions as teachers is to train Arthur's power of hearing. In such a country as England that should not be difficult, for Time is more and more the very voice of the land. The pity is that 'remains', the still

present forms of a living past, are looked for in so narrow a sphere. They are sought in ancient buildings and pre-historic sites, when they can be found also in abundance in the language, the habits, and the social life of the people to-day. No community is so poor or so 'new' (humanity is not new), as not to have a vast supply.<sup>1</sup> But some fortunate communities have an unusually large number of them in readily tangible and sensible forms. For such, Time in its genuine historic sense should come to be grasped and understood without great difficulty. The commonest source of failure consists in looking elsewhere than in the present world for the expression of Time's reality. We cannot too often insist that for Arthur to learn History is to look rightly at his own world, and in no country is this more true than in England.

Along with historic time, Arthur might in this way be helped to feel something of still vaster time, geological time. He will then see the earth itself as expressing the same thing that he found in grandfather, and the ground will be prepared for the fusion of his History and his Science in a philosophy suited to the life and needs of his age. He is fortunate if his home area affords opportunities, if, for instance, it is an area where fossils are found.

It is in such ways as these rather than in the excessive and meticulous manipulation of a deceptive Line of

<sup>1</sup> Recently in Rhodesia, the writer heard of schoolboys who did not know what Easter meant, and why they had a holiday then. Yet the word 'holiday' is itself a 'remain', typical of many that the European carries with him wherever he goes. And for the Rhodesian it is much more 'alive' than is Zimbabwe!



Time, that Arthur will come to a vital grasp of the meaning of Time such as will influence his whole outlook. There is little in Arthur's world which it will not influence, just as there is little in his world which, in some way or another, may not contribute to the fullness of it.

From this very brief survey of the Time-factor in the teaching of History, it would appear, then, that too much can be made of it in the railway time-table form of a date series, while too much cannot be made of it in the form of a living quality which all in Arthur's world will come to possess if he is properly taught.

We might express the essence of the matter by saying that *change* rather than the trot-trot of the date-series is the dominant truth to be grasped and lived in—Change which is to be felt as constant, continuous, and all-pervading. Two of the qualities of Change as it governs human affairs will be especially impressed upon Arthur. One is its *slowness*, the other is its *massiveness*. The slowness may not be very apparent to us in an age which seems so full of hustle, but it is real nevertheless. The externals of life, such as mechanical methods of communication and manufacture, may change with almost bewildering rapidity, and even customs and forms of amusement may seem to reveal a mutability almost as great. How different now is Sunday, for instance, compared with what it was only a short time ago! Moreover, Change may appear at times to be less rapid than it really is, as when an imposing ancient façade continues to stand up much as ever while profound transformation has been going on behind it. Still,

in spite of all this, Arthur's History teaching will not have had its full effect unless he has at least the beginnings of a conviction that the bringing about of fundamental changes in human affairs must always be a slow business. We who recall the inflated hopes and effervescent enthusiasms of the later years of the War and of the months immediately following its close, should have no difficulty in agreeing. For in the midst of the *varium et mutabile semper* there is the core of human nature itself, and the really important things of life are much as they always were. What Arthur's History should do is to enable him to sort out these things, instruments and conventions and social apparatus, which may and should change, from those things of end and principle which remain constant amid changing forms of realization and expression. He may be helped thus to learn the double lesson of Patience and Confidence, Patience because human adaptability works slowly, Confidence because he knows that it must work while the fundamental things may remain. Indeed, we may even help him to understand that the temper which resists Change just because it is Change may be one of the cruellest and most calamitous forms of fanaticism, because inspired by that mother of cruelty, Fear.

The quality of *massiveness* is connected with the slowness. Fanatical minorities are always conspicuously lacking in the historical mind. They grasp neither the necessary slowness of change nor its necessary massiveness. The English temper has always been much too strong for them, and if we are to believe writers like Herr Fülöp-Müller it is true of Russia—that enormous

human mass—that *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*.

Both qualities, as characteristic of human change, point again to the supreme importance of wholeness and of a treatment of History that will emphasize always the mass-continuity of its substance. The illustration of the cable with its component strands will occur to mind here, as well as the stress that was placed in a former chapter on the marking out for study of certain unified historic 'regions', and on the need for securing that Arthur quite early formed a coherent general framework for his knowledge of History.

In conclusion two other general reflections that bear upon this central fact of Change and the interpretation of it for Arthur may be mentioned. One is the question of Progress. Is any 'Law' of Change traceable? Not that we need actually state it for Arthur, but is there any such Law, the sense and spirit of which is to inspire our teaching? Does Change move onward to a goal, to

Some far-off divine event

To which the whole creation moves?

We are less optimistic about it to-day than Tennyson and his contemporaries were, and it would be a mistake if our teaching of History to Arthur suggested such an easy optimism to him. The tendency to limit the possibilities of experience by the imposition of a pre-ordained scheme will usually lead to a falsification of History and of life as well. Insistence upon a Law of Progress may easily induce this state of mind, and an unpleasant and possibly anti-social type may well be the result. We may well be content to suggest to Arthur, or let

him find out for himself, certain of the strands where it does seem that there has been a growth towards a 'better'. Health, personal security, care of the weak and aged, and perhaps religious toleration are examples. But we who have passed through the Great War and its sequelae may be forgiven if we hesitate to accept as a universal Law a steady and regular progression towards a 'better' throughout all History. We have done a great deal for Arthur if we have made him understand that effort towards any 'better' whatever is a *common* effort, calling for the co-operation of individual human wills; that the efforts of past generations are not dead to-day; and that, whatever 'goods' he may pursue he will pursue them the better if he knows himself to be really a co-operator with generations long 'dead'.

The other point that is sometimes raised is whether we can grasp Change in past times 'as it really happened'. The question does not matter so much as might appear, for, obviously, we can never know the Past as it actually happened. We know both too much and too little. We can never see the Reformation as it appeared to Luther and his contemporaries, for we can never have their experience. On the other hand, we not only can but must see it as they never saw it, for we are living in a subsequent age in a world to which it made so much difference. Not only so, we cannot help seeing it in a way which is coloured through and through by the special interests and prejudice and standpoints of our own generation. Hence, so far as History for Arthur is concerned, it is of less importance to do 'justice' to a historical character or period by an

attempt at objective reconstruction than to see the character or period in the light of present significance. Again, then, we have a point of view which subordinates, though it does not by any means abolish, the importance of objective reconstruction in past time, by means of dates and 'scientific' History.

## IX

### YARNS

IT seems necessary to devote a chapter to the subject of Stories and their use in the early stages of History teaching. There is no better example of the prevailing chaos of ideas about Little Arthur's History and of the want of grip and actuality that seem to characterize our handling of it than is to be found in the use made of Stories. In view of such a situation, 'Yarns' does seem to be the proper term to use.

There is a prevailing idea that Little Arthur's History consists of just stories and nothing more. The syllabus for the early stages consists usually of an assorted and unorganized collection—like mixed biscuits—which though it sometimes tries to be representative, seldom succeeds in being coherent. History, we are told, in defence, is itself a story, and the natural introduction to it is just story-telling.

There is truth enough in the argument to make it plausible. But failure to analyse sufficiently the idea of History to begin with, and, most of all, failure to look ahead and to make clear to ourselves what History is to be and do *for Arthur*, lead on to failure to grasp just the vital essentials in which History differs from 'mere' stories. It is the main object of this chapter to make the point clear.

Now it is true that the word 'story' is itself but a form of the word 'History'. Yet we have still kept the full word, and if it be traced back to the Greek

usage the discovery will be made that it meant, even then, more than a story.

It means rather a form of knowledge arrived at by investigation, something much more closely akin to what we now call Science than to what passes for History in the average primary school.

The conception of History that we have already outlined seems closer to the Greek view, and the study of it is a far greater matter than just story-telling. For we cannot too often repeat that History is directly concerned with the stuff of life itself which has to be investigated and analysed and organized so as to be seen in its Time-dimension. History is the study of that Life which is the very stuff of my being, which frames the pattern of my daily actions, determines the speech I use, and governs the form of the house I live in, the instruments I employ, the clothes I wear, the food I eat, the very thoughts I think. The study of it is something very far removed in spirit and actuality from the unreal atmosphere of romance and fancifulness which the cult of 'stories' is apt to generate in school. Plainly the ideal that we have to keep in view is very much more like the ideal of Science than that of Literature. It is a healthy sign that representative writers like H. G. Wells should have perceived this vital truth and should have begun to preach it with such vividness and insistence. Wells's own now-famous 'Outline' is a good exemplification of the close connexion that is now appreciated between the two. We may also remember that he makes his schoolmaster-hero in *The Undying Fire* an apostle for the combined

teaching of History and Biology as the foundation for any sound modern education.

Arthur will hardly reach these heights during his years in the primary school, but this book will have been written in vain if it is not realized that it is towards such heights that his teaching must look from the very first.

The common element in both the History and the stories is what is known as the 'human interest'. Now there is, of course, a sense in which nothing human is alien to the all-comprehensiveness of History, and the whole range of Arthur's experience should come sooner or later into its stream. But we are concerned here with History teaching in a strict and specific sense, in a school where there is all too little time for it. Great as the human interest of the stories may be, they will cause endless irrelevancy and waste of time unless their use is kept rigorously subordinated to the main purpose of teaching *History* as we have defined it.

That there is a good deal of confusion on the subject seems obvious enough. To cite Wells again. In his book *The World of William Clissold* (really a thesis on an interpretation of History) he tells of a film-producer who approached a distinguished writer for a scheme for a film to depict the main stages in the History of Mankind. The plan was sketched out and the producer then went on to ask whether it would not be possible to introduce the thread of a story; of a girl who gets into difficulties, of a scheming villain, of a fair-headed hero or so—'in order to give a touch of human interest'. The producer is presumed to know his audience, and



Wells's point seems to be to satirize the popular mind and taste which will find an insufficient strain of human interest in the story of Mankind as a whole. The point of the satire is not unconnected with our present methods of handling Little Arthur's History.

Wells himself seems to have been compelled to make concessions to the very thing he satirizes. For his book about William Clissold is, as we have said, itself an attempt to sketch an interpretation of History, seen from the standpoint of a highly vivid present. Yet Wells has to invent William Clissold, his brother Dickon, and several women, to give the book 'a human interest', and the human interest becomes so intense towards the end that the author has to kill off the main characters and end the book summarily, for the interpretation of history threatens to disappear in a story that has become pure romance of the old kind—a man and a woman in love.

Evidently the expression 'human interest' covers different *kinds* of things, and we have still to discover what is the kind of human interest that belongs to History as such. For it is by the cultivation of that particular interest, whatever it may be, that we shall develop in Arthur the spirit of History, and as there seem to be various kinds we may quite well be misled in the pursuit of the wrong one. The novel has a human interest, so has the drama, so has the film. But not necessarily the human interest that belongs to History. Perhaps we may get a hint of guidance from historical drama and the historical novel where two kinds of interests appear to combine. The drama or novel may

be of the less value historically in proportion as it is more truly a work of art. For it is of the essence of artistic material to be plastic to the intention of the artist, and the more he allows hard fact to remain hard, the less plastic it is to his expressive purpose.

A writer who, like Stanley Weyman, cares most for plot and scenario, may be of greater value for History teaching than one like Thackeray whose chief concern is with characterization. What is gained for one kind of human interest is lost for another.

So the presence or absence of human interest is not sufficient to differentiate History from Story. Is, then, the quality of 'Pastness' in History the basis of the distinction we seek? It would seem not. For there is much that is genuinely of the Past which has little or no significance for History, while, as we have seen, there is much in the present which has very high significance for it. A story about aeroplanes may have a great deal of history value, and a story about cave-men may not.

To talk about Little Arthur's History as does the Board of Education Report previously referred to, as 'an attempt to arouse the child's interest in the romance of the past', while it may put a rose-coloured glow on the confusion, does but serve to deepen it.

Mere 'Pastness', then, is not enough to differentiate true History from Story. What about *Fact*? Is History concerned exclusively with what actually happened and Story with what may or may not have happened? There is some truth in the distinction, but still it does not go far enough. It is true that History is concerned only with what actually happened. But ideas happen as well

as actions, and the play of *Hamlet* is as much an historical event as the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Moreover, as we have seen, there is a very real sense in which the truths of History are timeless. We might even say, in Irish fashion, that there is a good deal of History that has not happened at all yet.

And Fact, as Plato showed once for all, is not the same thing as Truth. The *facts* of the Reformation, for instance, are things that just happened. The truths that were concerned in it, even more essential to History than the facts, cannot be said to happen at all. They just are.

We may suggest two qualities as essential to anything that is to be called History as distinct from Story, with the warning, however, that the two must be taken together. One is *Actuality*; the other is *Significance for the Self* as situated here and now. Without the actuality, the sense that the thing actually was or is, we are in the play-world of fairyland, whither children are supposed to be longing to flee, away from the drab actualities of the commonplace present. No more need be said about that at the moment.

The other criterion is usually less noted, but it is of high importance. We can imagine Little Arthur being often disposed to say, as he listens to the recitals of the History lesson: 'Yes, I have no doubt it was so, and I have no wish to question the fact of it. But what on earth has it got to do with *me*?' History teaching that fails to answer such a question fails as History teaching, and if there is a topic where no satisfactory answer can be given, that topic ought not to be taught. The

principle seems as clear as daylight, yet it is constantly ignored both in the manner of teaching and in the choice of material. Arthur's present world—his present interests and need to understand and live in his world intelligently—forms, we must repeat, the starting-point and the ultimate focus of all his History teaching. As he learns History, for every item of it, he must be able to say: 'Now I know more about myself and this curious human world I live in'. If he cannot say that, he is not learning History, however much he may be regaled with a diet of mixed stories.

We may take a pointed illustration from Shakespeare's *Tempest*. The ship has been wrecked on Prospero's isle; its shipwrecked company will soon arrive, and it is necessary now that Miranda should know who she is and how she came to the island. Prospero, with his: 'I pray you, mark me, that a brother should be so perfidious', tells her the story, and how splendidly Shakespeare describes for us the effect on Miranda! The story is actual, and it illuminates with startling vividness her present situation. That is the model for History teaching; these are the criteria of the 'story' which is also History. Any one who has looked up old registers to trace his own descent and has used a little imagination in the process will have had something of Miranda's feeling.

Let us take another illustration from the Old Testament this time. When Israel passed over Jordan they were told to set up a memorial altar, a stone for each tribe. The formula ran: 'And when your children in time to come shall say, What mean ye by these stones,

ye shall say . . . ?' That is, here is something in the children's present world and they ask for the actuality to which it refers and how it is significant for them. That, again, is History.

The point is of such importance that yet another example may be given. In a school for young natives on the Gold Coast a lesson in History was being given by the teacher, a son of a chief. He began by asking his class to sing a native song which had a refrain something like this: 'Go, fetch your father's head from the Krobo Mountain!' He then asked them what the reference of the song was, and 'elicited' that it recalled the days when head-hunting raiders descended from the mountains upon the people of the plains, carried off the women and the heads of the men, and left behind them devastation and the inheritance of a blood-feud of vengeance for the young. The teacher then put the crucial question, 'Why do not such things happen now?' and a genuine History lesson was well launched, for the distant mountain was visible from the open window of the school.

One could wish that History lessons to Little Arthurs elsewhere always deserved the name as fully as this instance does.

Our two criteria, we have noted, must be taken together. Thus there may be actuality without present significance as in many 'true' stories that pass for History. And there may be present significance without actuality as in the case of the Parables. Neither would be History as we have defined it for Little Arthur.

We might say shortly that Story is *play*; History is *business*. School has a place for both, but its main concern is to do business in a form as much like play as possible. So long as we persist in misunderstanding children so completely as to talk about their inability to be interested in the commonplace present, the play and the business will run in separate channels, and much futility and waste of time will be occasioned in a pursuit of the life of a Never-Never Land. Let us have 'Peter Pan' by all means, for it abounds in human interest. But let us remember that if History, too, is a story, it is something else as well, and its virtue as History resides in that something else.

Some conclusions might now be drawn as to the place of the story in History teaching.

In the first place it should be clear that the only story to be used is the story with a purpose. That is, with a purpose subordinated to and illustrative of the immediate purpose of the History teaching. Upon this condition stories will be used for a variety of ends: to illuminate a historic 'region', to give life and vividness to phases of culture, to illustrate the working of human motive as the history-making force, and, important enough, to bring out historical significances in the present. Always the teacher will ask, 'What is this story *for*?' the 'for' having reference to some definite end of historical teaching. The application of this principle alone might rid us of a good deal of lumber both from the lessons and the books.

Again, the story, both in selection and in treatment, must conform to what has been laid down about present

significance. Somehow or other the present must become more meaningful as the result of the telling of it, and the point of reference in the present must be recognized and emphasized. This principle is sometimes stated, as it seems to us, the wrong way round. Interest is centred in the past and the point in the present is picked out merely as a sort of vestigial survival to serve as a mnemonic for the recalling of past history. Thus one writer in a little book on History and Citizenship suggests that the 'Fid. Def.' on our coinage serves as a remainder and reminder of the Reformation. The emphasis should be the other way round, on the present first and foremost. If it is thus shifted, it then becomes clear that the 'Fid. Def.' on our coinage is in no sense a vital form in which the Reformation persists in our own day. It refers back, not to the Reformation as a whole, but to one passing incident in it, a literary performance by Henry VIII. The direct persistence of the Reformation among us is surely obvious enough, in the diversity of churches and sects which it has left as its heritage. Live teaching would begin from that and then reveal it in historic dimension as involving the history of the Reformation. To relegate the Reformation to the 'past' at the outset, as though it were over and done with, and then to seek out some obscure fragment of a trace of it in the present to serve as a memory-aid, is just one more example of that perversely ingenious pedagogy which loves to sheer off from realities and take refuge in Method devices.

Perhaps it need hardly be added that a purely haphazard selection of stories, even though it might be

called representative, is always to be avoided. If no story is selected or used without a relevant historical purpose in view, and if the purposes themselves are governed by a definite plan of organization such as is suggested in Chapter V, there will be no need for independent organization of the stories. So once again Wholeness appears as a determining principle.

It is worth noting that the stories need not all be derived from or refer to the past. Indeed, they will hardly achieve their full purpose if they are thus limited. Stories of present-day human activities, enterprises, and adventures will serve to throw further light on the stuff of History itself.

Failure to bring the use of stories in History teaching under the discipline of a well-thought-out aim and a clear principle of action, along with the extensive use actually made of such stories, has produced, or helped to produce, a whole crop of undesirable results.

The chaos and scrappiness of much of the teaching are largely to be ascribed to them. The Board of Education Report to which we have previously referred complains justly of this want of discrimination, but, so far as we are aware, suggests no clear principle of guidance to the harassed teacher. And the teacher, struggling quite rightly to work out a fairly representative syllabus, is led quite inevitably into a chaotic eclecticism if he has no clear principle to guide him.

The need for constant self-reference in the interpretation of historical material—the kind of reference that Miranda made to herself of Prospero's story—has also been obscured by the way in which stories have been



chosen and used. It has been thought enough that the story should be 'interesting', that the children should like to listen to it, and that it should have some basis of fact. The 'story' atmosphere that pervaded the whole thing shut it off from the region of actualities, and though the teacher might refer to present experience to elucidate points of the story, it was too little realized that the real purpose of the story was rather to elucidate present experience. Hence the same sort of topsy-turveydom, of *wrong-endedness*, that we have already noted in the case of the 'Fid. Def.' survival.

Over-emphasis on great men has been another consequence, and with it the prevention of a just historical perspective and a stimulus to the *staccato* conception of History. Great men stand out, material about them is easily accessible, and it is natural that the stories should deal much with them. As great men must be to children even more of an enigma than they are to grown-ups, 'stories' about them are either largely unintelligible or else deal with trivialities like the wart on Cromwell's nose or Nelson's adventure with the pear-tree. Again, it is just the significant that is missed. Choice should be made either of men whose life and work can be shown to have had a definite effect still living in the present, like Columbus, or Nelson, or Luther; or of ordinary individuals like a Roman centurion, a medieval peasant, a monk, or an Elizabethan merchant. In either case it will then be possible to give the necessary touch of significance.

The waste of time on trivialities and insignificances needs no further emphasis, though it is tragic enough

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when we reflect upon Arthur's need and upon the shortness of the time that is available for teaching him.

Of the want of actuality that must prevail the Board of Education Report on London Schools gives at least one most illuminating glimpse. It states that so far as could be ascertained none of the schools which were selected for investigation appeared to possess an historical atlas! Why should it, if History is a sort of News from Nowhere, somehow of interest to this world of ours but not very vitally connected with it? In view of what has been said of the frequent merging of History and Geography that should occur in a well-taught primary school the absence of the historical atlas is ominous. Does not the prevailing 'story' atmosphere help to explain it? Who wants to know the site of Bluebeard's castle or the travel-route of Sindbad the Sailor?

The Board of Education Report itself encourages the very attitude out of which neglect of the atlas is bound to arise. It suggests, quite rightly, that a settled emotional attitude should be one of the objectives of History teaching. But when it goes on to suggest that the emotion is a feeling for 'the romance of the past', and not just a warm and generous enthusiasm for humanity itself, it is helping to perpetuate the very evils it laments. For that is to depart from actuality, from a sense of the past as here and *living*, and from History as a major key to the interpretation of life itself, and to take a full header into the sea of Yarns. After that, all the rest must follow. We would not go so far as to suggest that Romance should be rigorously

excluded altogether from the teaching of Arthur's History, but we should always feel a little uneasy about its entrance. It is not the business of History teaching to produce that kind of dreamer.

Combine such romanticism with the cult of an intense and exclusive national patriotism to which many influential people would subordinate Arthur's History teaching, and you may get a blend of Don Quixote and St. George which, while it may be picturesque, will certainly be astonishingly futile where it is not positively dangerous. A country placed as England is to-day could hardly afford to teach History to her Little Arthurs in such a spirit.

## X

### METHODS AND DEVICES

THE purpose of the present chapter is to discuss certain details of teaching-technique. It comes late in the book for a reason that should now be sufficiently obvious. A main general criticism that is to be passed on the teaching of History in the primary schools, at any rate those of England, is that there is too great pre-occupation with the details and conventions and tricks of Method, and far too little play of critical intelligence upon questions of aim and content and ultimate values. As we have seen, this position is itself an illustration of our general thesis. The understanding of it and of the reasons for it involves some knowledge of the social and educational history of England in the nineteenth century. It is a result, as we have said, of an order of things where it was thought necessary to *train* the primary school teacher but a little improper and even subversive to *educate* him. Hence it is natural that the tricks of craftsmanship should acquire a fictitious prominence and value, while critical intelligence, uncultivated by a liberal education, was all too little called into play.

One purpose of this book is to make an attempt to redress the balance, to induce teachers and others to think out the whole matter anew and more comprehensively. Hence we have emphasized ultimate conceptions and values, and have refrained deliberately from saying much about Method. In discussing certain

aspects of it in this chapter we do so mainly as illustrating the need for criticism, and the value of clear-cut general conceptions as an instrument for such criticism. For the effectiveness of methods depends at least as much upon the presence of a perfectly clear idea of what we want to do, as upon ready fertility in inventing them and practised skill in the use of them. The spectacle of teachers handling with uncanny skill material of which they can give no intelligent account, either of its content or its purpose, is still all too painfully common.

Let us begin, then, by recalling yet again what we are trying to do with 'History' in school. Our purpose is to enable Little Arthur to develop at least the beginnings of a power of historical interpretation, a power that is to interpret the life of his present world by constructing it in terms of its Time-dimensions. We are to endow him, that is, with constructive vision of a very special and valuable kind. The object in view might be shortly summed up in the phrase 'Historic Sense'. But, as the world with which we and Arthur are concerned is primarily a social world, we may expand the phrase and speak of a 'Social-Historic Sense' as the objective.

The achievement of such a sense involves above all things *construction*, and this is pre-eminently a work of Imagination. Hence of the nature of Imagination something will have to be said, particularly as so many of the usual devices of Method claim to be based on an appeal to it.

The general nature and function of Imagination, particularly as it has been called upon in the teaching of History, have not always been rightly understood.

Children are said to show strong imaginative powers, and this is true. But the power is only *relatively* strong because their world is so largely a perceptual world and the capacity of pure discursive thinking, independently of the presence of perceived objects, is so undeveloped. The imagination of children compared with that of adults is really weak. They fail to draw clearly the line between what is imagined and what is perceived; they need perceptual props all the time; and the constructional links are often very roughly and weakly forged. A keen interest in fairy-stories is sometimes adduced to prove the strength of imagination. But the liking of children for such stories may last only as long as genuine imagination remains in truth weak. Unless imagination were either largely dormant or weak, children would soon become alive to the incongruities and defective links in the usual fairy-story. We recall for instance a fairy-story appearing in *Punch* where the adult writer had brought to bear an adult imagination upon the usual material. He gave a diverting account, for instance, of the troubles of a wearer of the Seven-League Boots in adjusting his stride with sufficient exactness to arrive at the door of the castle which was his destination. We believe he had to take the boots off in the end in order to make the adjustment with sufficient delicacy. And there was a prince who had just been turned into a tortoise, wandering about in desperation asking, 'What do tortoises eat?' There comes a time when these difficulties are seen even by children, and they then tire of fairy-stories because of the breakdown of the illusion in face of growing imaginative power. They may then

turn to *Alice in Wonderland*, where, amid all the seeming madness, Imagination and Logic are much more truly wed.

Even adults often read their novels and other imaginative literature, and watch their films, with the same imaginative dormancy.

We may suspect that the modern passion for giving free-play to the 'imagination' of children in fanciful forms such as the fairy-story, is not unconnected with the reaction against Puritanism in all its forms. Puritanism not only shut out a great deal of the world, including the most attractive parts of it, from children; it propagated also a severe doctrine of work and discipline which imposed an all too bitter yoke on childhood for two centuries or more. We may suspect that the vogue of the fairy-story and the History-story is, very largely, part of the romanticist reaction against these hardnesses. (It is worth noticing that, in putting forward this suggestion, we are once again interpreting a present phenomenon historically. The habit grows on one!)

The time has now come, however, when we should look squarely at this question of Imagination. Madame Montessori, among others, has tried to do so, and has brought down upon herself the indignant protests of the fairy-tale school of thought in consequence.

For her, imagination is creative and interpretative. Its material is the material of the common life, and its purpose is the construction out of that material of keys and instruments wherewith to interpret and command the problems of the 'real' world. The activity of the engineer or the architect is the type of it. The

Montessori Apparatus is a prepared field for the exercise and cultivation of such imagination.

This conception accords much better with the needs of History teaching from the standpoint we have adopted than a conception which makes *escape* from the 'real' world the outstanding motive of imagination. Wherever there is talk of the uninteresting quality of the 'commonplace present' as a point of departure in History teaching, we may suspect the operation of the spurious and even mischievous conception of imagination.

The constructive work of true imagination in History teaching is done in the material both of the present and of the past. The need for long-continued exercises for Little Arthur in the imaginative construction of the social data of his present world so as to build up a coherent notion of it has already been sufficiently emphasized. It is that part of the work of imagination in History teaching which is most persistently and disastrously neglected.

We will concern ourselves here rather with that imaginative construction of 'past' data whose work is steadily to build up the interpretative structure which lies behind and extends into the present. Its work, that is, is with what we may call the *interpretative backing* of the present. Little Arthur can never actually see the past 'as it was'. None of us can. But unless he can construct the past in its own right, as it were, and see it *as* the past, he can never satisfactorily achieve the final vision of seeing it alive in the present. The error so prevalent in teaching consists not so much in neglect



to stimulate this construction of the past as of failure to take the final step and fuse the two imaginative constructions of present and past.

We may now proceed to discuss briefly some of the devices used in school to stimulate and guide the imaginative activity. In doing so, we shall try to show how a governing conception of what Little Arthur's History is to be and do for him, may serve to discipline these somewhat wayward devices and free us from the dangerous illusion that any particular device has any particular value in itself.

First, and perhaps most valuable, we may take *Remains*. In the light of the conception of History here adopted their importance can hardly be over-estimated. For it is a main part of our thesis that such remains are with us and all around us here and now. Only, as we see them, they are far too much alive to be described by such an obituary term. The tendency in school is generally to prefer dead remains to live ones, and to overlook the rich diversity of the deposit of History. Why, we are ourselves part of it! Our use of 'remains' in teaching History is much too suggestive of the man who would study the movement of a glacier by neglecting the glacier entirely and confining himself to the examination of its lateral and terminal moraines. These are, no doubt, highly significant of the direction and tendency of the glacier's movement, but they are not the glacier itself. Remains are not *débris*.

To ruined abbeys and ancient castles we can add language itself, the ceremonies and formularies of the Church, a rich deposit of ideas and practice in

Parliament and Law Courts and Universities, the partition and lie of the fields and woods, the direction of the roads, and a thousand and one other 'remains'. Some will be a little too complex for Arthur's understanding at this stage; some too trifling to be worth troubling him with.

*Significance* again, is what we shall look for in those we do choose, checking our choice by considerations of suitability for Arthur's present age and capacity. He must know something of the military and administrative genius of the Normans, so the Norman castle and cathedral must have their place, and with them the juries and the judges on circuit. The difference between the castle as a 'remain' on the one hand, and the still vigorous legal practices on the other hand, must be emphasized. Akin to the legal practices will be the Norman contribution to the form and vocabulary of the language. Such 'remains' will be invoked especially at those stages where the History is being handled 'regionally' as we have termed it, that is, where an effort is being made to form some idea of the whole life of an age and to relate it to the present.

One special danger to be avoided in this connexion is that of sentimentalism, an attitude into which it is fatally easy to fall in a country so rich with mellowed deposits of the past as England.

The teacher will have some motive to guard against it if he remembers that one effect of over-emphasis on the romance and rich glow of a warmly coloured past may be to divert the direction of vision away from the future. England is already living quite sufficiently on

her past, and it is a poor contribution to her future to train up Little Arthurs in a habit of dreamy, sentimental contemplation towards it. Flight from actuality is again of the essence of such a proceeding, and it should be a main object of History-teaching to check the disposition to such romantic cowardice, and—to use a vulgarism—to train Arthur to keep his nose down to realities.

The making of models of historic remains has appeared as an exercise in some schools in recent years and instruction in the making of such models finds a place in the course of at least some of the Training Colleges. Here again the question about worth-whileness is, as a rule, not sufficiently pressed. It is insufficient, and somewhat irrelevant, to reply that such exercises help to fill out and diversify the course in handwork. Handwork should follow its own lines and have its own objectives and values. The subjects chosen will, again, be those that lend themselves most readily to the purposes of handwork, not those which have special value as illuminative of the History. Any waste of time that occurs is, possibly, more at the expense of the handwork than of the History, but the question may still be asked whether much of the work is really worth while from the point of view of the History. So far as some knowledge of a Norman castle, of forms of medieval architecture, of the plan of a monastery, of the houses and utilities of primitive peoples, and so on, may be necessary as constructional material, this may be quite as effectively and much more expeditiously conveyed by clear pictures and drawings.

The plea of 'correlation' often rests upon an idea of 'subjects' that is quite formal and external, and *schoolish*, rather than substantial and real. This subject is associated with that by virtue of some formal and superficial connexion, by a sort of pedagogic *force majeure*, instead of being seen as differentiations growing out of a common nucleus.

Here again we seem to have an example of the substitution of formal technique of craftsmanship for a penetrating critique of unity. 'This will be a useful exercise for handwork' we say, and we straightway use it without either questioning its value as really significant for History or indeed without having in view any considered scheme of unity and reality of teaching at all. It is conceivable that in a number of those London schools where no historical atlas was to be found, models of historic remains were being made in the handwork classes.

If handwork is to have associations this way at all there is much more to be said for using it to play its part in dramatic production, say of some play with an historical setting. The work then acquires unity and significance such as it might not have otherwise.

Pictures will always have a very high value as aids to imaginative construction, especially pictures of actual remains and pictures contemporary with the period being studied. There has been, of recent years, an enormous improvement in school history-books in this regard, and there is more care now than formerly to select what is genuinely significant. The thing to be avoided is the 'work of art' which is full of anachronisms

and false suggestions, as for example, the coronation of William the Conqueror depicted with knights in full plate-armour of the fifteenth century. The History picture needs to be photographic rather than 'artistic': truth to historic fact is the criterion, not quality of composition or dramatic effect. The invented picture or diagram may have positive advantages also in the way of clearness and emphasis. There is a good example in the plan of an imaginary English village that figures in the first volume of C. R. L. Fletcher's *Introductory History of England*.

Plans, maps, and diagrams will be freely used not only in the interests of the mental framework of Time and Space, but also as a means of illustrating relationships and modes of causation. There seems to be no reason, except the tradition of oral teaching, why senior pupils in the primary school should not keep a notebook for these things. Such a book would be of value in helping to secure the framework, and the keeping of it might give rise to a good deal of useful ingenuity both in teacher and pupils. Its value for the purposes of the imaginative construction that has to go on continually should be obvious enough. And to acquire the power and habit of recording quickly and simply in a few expressive symbols his ideas of the relations that occur in human history is a valuable thing for Little Arthur.

What is called the Dramatic Method has been freely used in the primary schools and places where they love to give names to Methods. There is an obvious appeal for children in the dramatizing of human situations, whether historical or not. And the method has its uses

in teaching History to children where the factors in the situation to be represented are sufficiently elemental and simple. Some of the Homeric stories would lend themselves readily to such treatment, as would some of the stories from the earlier periods of English History.

But the method has also its limitations and its dangers. It is obviously unsuitable for the complexities of more modern History, and, if used, can hardly fail to convey impressions that may be even ludicrously false. Indeed, the greater part of the material that should rightly be used in teaching Arthur's History is likely to be unsuitable for treatment by such a method, and superficiality and distortion may well arise from the attempt to use it. Teachers themselves are forced in time to realize this, and the danger is then, that in the effort to find suitable material they may fall back on trivialities like Alfred and the cakes, which, though they lend themselves to dramatization, can hardly be said to have historical value. So, once more, sound principles of selection are sacrificed to the exigencies of orthodox craftsmanship.

At the level of mere pageantry the method may have its uses, but pageantry does not go very far. The episode of the Field of the Cloth of Gold is easy enough to pageantize, but, apart from the question whether Arthur should be troubled at all with this typical exhibition of Renaissance politics, how much of the *meaning* of the incident would the dramatization help him to understand? When England had her strong attack of 'pageant fever' some twenty years ago, a deposit of good was, no doubt, left behind. But it is easy

to exaggerate the extent to which real appreciation of History was strengthened by such displays. And there is always a touch of the fantastic and even ludicrous in them unless they are very well done. They appeal much less to understanding than to patriotic and aesthetic emotion.

There is yet another doubt about dramatization for children. How far can they really sustain a representative role? To watch children at the work is to find good reason for doubts. Here, for instance, is a representation of a medieval tournament with two little boys as combatants. The Queen of Beauty gives the signal. The trumpet speaks, and, in an incredibly short time, all idea of representation is lost in the combative joys of a bloodthirsty present. Lost, that is, to every one but the teacher, who intervenes hurriedly to put an end to a present so uninteresting and commonplace!

The truth is that drama keeps us still in the story atmosphere, and if it does touch realities they are often the quite unhistoric realities of an active and strenuous present. There *is* drama in History no doubt, just as there is story in History. But there is also much more, and it is with the 'much more' that this book is chiefly concerned.

A word or two may be said about books. Happily there is now no lack of excellent books for class use, nearly all well illustrated and containing, usually, a judicious selection of material. But Little Arthur should come into touch with a good many history-books and should do a considerable amount of browsing, especially among the illustrated ones. Country schools,

under authorities which have good circulating libraries, are now very often much better served than city schools. Children can have the real big books in school with them for a week or two, and time-table exigencies release them for considerable stretches of time from having to sit and hear teacher talk. More might be done in this direction, even in the town schools. Much of what now figures as material for the conventional oral lesson should be left for Arthur to read for himself. There is no reason at all why all the children should read the same books. Indeed, a little loosening of the rigidity of a prepared syllabus or list of lessons would bring gain all round.

We have already spoken of the note book which, it is suggested, every Little Arthur should be expected to keep. We hesitate to mention any more duly baptized 'Methods', but what is called the Dalton Plan suggests itself in this connexion. In addition to the guidance of the work of imaginative construction of the past, the oral teaching will be concerned very largely with bringing about that *self-reference* of the historical material by the pupils, upon which so much emphasis has been laid. This is really a kind of rationalization and assimilation. The Reformation is 'referred' to the present day Church life of which Arthur knows something, and the story of Mohammed may well be referred to the present India for which Arthur as a British citizen will some day have his share of responsibility.

Oral teaching should thus be much more critical and analytic and much less purely descriptive than it usually is. Much of the sheer material should come



from reading, and the concern of the history lesson should be with its rationalization and elucidation and reference to the present. Arthur's growing power of *judgement*, weak as it may be as yet, should be trained to play upon historical material, so that he comes to look upon it reflectively and in the light of his own present. To train him to *live in* his History as something to be thought about and understood, rather than to stand outside and just *look at* it as a sort of pageant—that is the real goal towards the attainment of which this book attempts to offer a contribution.

Thus the conclusion that appears to emerge from this very cursory discussion of Method is that methods as a whole require much more of flexibility and diversification. Above all, they need very urgently to be subjected to the play of a critical intelligence that knows clearly what it is doing in teaching History, and knows what the History is that is taught.

Especially is this true in the field of *Values* where, as we have seen, ultimate significances have so often been overlooked in the interests of a technique of craftsmanship which is often as superficial and pretentious as it is orthodox and uncritical.

That brings us to the question of the teacher, his outlook, and his training, and to this we must now turn.

## XI

### THE TEACHER

THE securing of a satisfactory result depends more upon the teacher in the teaching of History than in that of any other subject, except, perhaps, religion. The reason should now be clear enough. For History, if properly taught, becomes itself a way of life, a form of behaviour towards human things which has its own peculiar quality and value. As the teaching of it is the communication of a way of life, the teacher must himself have lived the life if he is to touch the springs of it in his pupils and stimulate its growth. It is the absence of any realization of this, of failure to bring the light of personal experience to bear upon the things of 'History', that still makes it possible for teachers to treat Feudalism as an invention of William the Conqueror, and the Renaissance as the result of the dispersion of a sort of Greek university by aggressive Turks.

That is not the way in which things happen, and unless the teacher has actually felt and observed in his own life and experience the way in which things happen, he cannot hope to teach History with any lasting effect, though he may vainly try to remedy its obvious futility by adding 'Civics' to the dose.

There are some disabilities for the teacher of History which only Time can cure. If it be true that we cannot learn real History until we are grown up, it is equally true that we can hardly teach it effectively until we are approaching middle age. So necessary is actual

experience in his own life of the way in which History is made, to the man who would teach it.

But, for the average teacher of the elementary school, there are other disabilities and difficulties which are themselves the product of a History. The teacher in the elementary school in England to-day is occupying a position of peculiar importance. Upon him depends, in no small degree, the state of mind in which the people carry through a revolution of life and thought which is now in progress. And his attitude towards the 'subject' of History may be more decisive in this regard than he is disposed to think. If he handles the subject with wisdom and insight and interprets it as the way of thought and life that it really is, the English way of continuity and orderly change may still be followed.

But if the tyranny of the book continues along with the elaborate conventions of a 'Method' that fails adequately to comprehend its subject, there may grow in the British citizen a tendency either to ignore History altogether as belonging to the other puerilities of school that we leave behind when we grow up, or, in ignorance of its real substance, to swallow whole some ready-made interpretation of it and be smitten with dogmatic fever in consequence.

If the elementary teacher still suffers from disabilities in attempting to face the responsible task imposed by such a situation, it is to History that we must turn for an explanation. There is no body of workers in England for whom the historic sense—the power to interpret life by History—has more immediate value than for the elementary teachers themselves. For their disabilities,

so far as these still continue, are to be explained as very largely the result of the social history of England for the last two or three centuries, which produced a new Estate of the Realm—the 'Poor'—and then, when education came to be generally provided, drew a sharp distinction between the necessities of it in their case, and in that of the more fortunately placed remainder of the population. So it resulted that England in the nineteenth century grew two quite separate kinds of teachers. There were those who educated the well-to-do and the ruling classes, and those who educated the poor. The former were educated but not trained; the latter trained but not educated. Nay more, the very idea of training was for long looked down upon by the members of the former group just because it was so intimately associated with the plebeians of the other group.

Things are much better now, no doubt, and everywhere, with greater or less sincerity, there are promises of amendment, and of more adequate recognition of the needs of the primary school teacher. Yet, improved as the situation is, it would be rank folly to ignore the history that lies behind it, a history which, to be properly understood, must be pushed back at least as far as the Reformation. For the consequences of it are far more potent in English education to-day than is sometimes realized.

A whole book could be written, and, we trust, may be written, on the subject. For the moment we are concerned only to indicate the effect of such a history upon the teaching of History itself in the elementary school. Here we have a 'subject' which demands above

all things a liberally educated teacher if it is to have its proper results. Yet the history of the elementary teacher has been such that a liberal education was just what he found most difficulty in securing. No sort of encouragement was given him and obstacles were placed in his way. Then, because he was so little educated, his work had to be minutely supervised and inspected. So he was driven still deeper into the ruts of routine and the fruitless formalisms of an ill-understood Method. Training Colleges grew up amid these conditions and served still further to fix and intensify them. Is it any wonder then that the work of the elementary school should be still too much a thing of tricks and devices and too little a thing of the large humane discourse that looks before and after and of the critical intelligence that looks deep? The wonder is that the schools should have done so well and should even, of late years, have had such an influence on the schools of the other group.

For the elementary teacher, then, who is to handle History teaching successfully, a liberal education must be regarded as essential. The truth is coming to be grasped but, perhaps, a little slowly. Changes in the training and outlook of the teacher have hardly kept pace with changes in the social situation and social possibilities of those whose children he will have to teach. That most primary teachers have now the foundation of a good secondary education for their training is a great gain. But the life of the past is still very strong in the training itself and much has yet to be done before it can be regarded as fully liberalized.

For social change and the movement of ideas are accelerating. As Mr. R. H. Gretton has pointed out, 'History' has now something much more than a select literary audience. It has become a field of inquiry to which ordinary men are more and more turning for answers to perplexities and problems which agitate them in the life of to-day. Witness, for instance, the striking achievements of the past few years in Economic History and the quite remarkable zest with which that form of historical study is being pursued. What is the force behind it if not a conviction—not always made articulate—that the intellectual key to present redress and present readjustment is to be found in a reinterpretation of past history? So we have the phenomenon, perhaps for the first time, of the common man—to use a colloquialism—beginning to sit up and take notice of History. In doing so he is thinking precious little of kings and reigns and the White Ship, but a very great deal about the immediate practical question: 'How exactly has my situation and that of my fellows come to be what it is?' That is, the ordinary man to-day is influenced more and more by the question which Mr. Gretton states in considered terms:

'Can historical knowledge systematize the conceptions of contemporary existence, formulate its tendencies, give shape and purpose to its discordant interests?'

It is characteristic of the usual good fortune of England that, speaking generally, those of her people who most keenly desire to bring about change are also the strongest believers in a re-interpretation of History as the intellectual justification and driving-power of such

change. The alternative, a dogmatic programme based on those 'abstract ideas' that Burke hated so fiercely, is so much less English in spirit that it might well be one of the chief objectives of History teaching in England to train and strengthen this healthy tendency which already shows itself so strongly. If such an objective is to be successfully pursued the whole training of the teacher will have to be brought into harmony with it. It would be fatal if History in school, and History as the adult feels it around him, should mean quite different things, the one just a 'story', the other the sources of the common life itself with all its pinches and puzzles.

But even a training inspired and backed by a genuine liberal education is not enough. As we have said, reflective experience of History-making processes themselves is necessary if History is to be taught as a way of life. The experience, we would urge, must be *reflective*. It is the habit of taking the things of the present for granted, and therefore commonplace, that must be overcome. If the teacher is not actively curious about his own social experiences, keen to get at the deeper sources of things that happen and critical of what he finds, he may help pupils to 'know' what is in the book, but he will teach very little History.

Nor should experience of history-making forces be regarded as a high matter reserved only for the great ones of the land. We all have such experience continually if we would only attend to it. Professor Graham Wallas in his *Great Society* quotes Milton's imaginative vision of the 'studious pens and heads' in

'this great City' (London) and urges us to similar exercises of imagination. London to-day may be too vast and complex to be compassed as a whole by the ordinary imagination. But some district of it might be taken as Thomas Burke takes Limehouse, and an effort could be made actually to *see* its life as a whole. The teacher might even at times play the very pleasant game of walking the streets and trying to construct imaginatively the life and outlook of individuals whom he meets. Something of the novelist's or poet's attitude towards common daily experience of things human is what he needs.

But most of all he needs to be a participant in some sustained co-operative effort. Only thus can he begin to realize how slowly changes come about, how complex is the interplay of forces, how odd and irrational the motives may be, how much persistence, how much drive, how much courage and patience and perhaps cajolery are involved in getting things done—and also how much stupidity and dearly hugged prejudice. Without such living experience of the actual life-process of History, he cannot hope to teach it with any success.

In some countries there is appearing a tendency to restrict the political freedom of the teacher as a citizen, especially the primary school teacher. Such a tendency is itself a recognition of the strength and importance of the position he holds in the social strategy. So far as the motive of it is to keep him to his proper function and to prevent him from abusing his trust for personal or narrowly party ends, such a tendency is necessary



and healthy. But sometimes it goes much farther than this and would make the teacher something less than a citizen just because he is a teacher. Such a policy, if pressed, would produce either revolt—which might or might not be a good thing—or a race of docile and acquiescent nonentities, which would be, beyond all doubt, a very bad thing. The teacher has the matter largely in his own hands. What he must secure at all costs is the right to move in and out quite freely among his fellows and to share in their legitimate corporate activities. The more he does so, the more he may develop and strengthen his own faith and philosophy in things human. As affecting the teaching of History that raises at once the question of so-called ‘partiality’ in the teaching of it. Let it be said at once that the teaching of Little Arthur’s History cannot be at one and the same time both alive and ‘impartial’ in the cold judicious sense, any more than the teaching of his religion can be at one and the same time both religious and undenominational. ‘Be honest and fear not,’ should be enough for the teacher, provided he adds a touch of the necessary judiciousness.

If he has any acquaintance with the very striking and even sweeping reinterpretations of English History that are now being worked out, his teaching may even become just a little controversial and be none the worse for it. The history of the Industrial Revolution—a matter of the first importance—affords an example of what is meant.

The teacher should not allow himself to be unduly perturbed or even influenced by talk about the ‘dignity’

of History, its supposed detached standpoint and magisterial function. Mr. R. H. Gretton, who is so much alive to the true purpose of History in the busy places of the modern world, puts the truth with clarity and force. He declares that the slightly pompous talk about waiting for 'the whole available evidence' and then giving a final judgement is really insincere:

'The academic historian waits until time has destroyed the baffling cross-lights of life, taken the heat out of loves and hatreds, obliterated the intangible suspicions, the equally intangible confidence and trust which makes up so much of the real moving forces of any given time when its people are alive in it.'

For him the qualms of the timid about giving a 'political' tone to History teaching are equally insincere:

'The teaching of History has always carried political implications; but so long as the classes to which it was taught remained the same as those from which the teachers were drawn, the political trend was less apparent.'

He adds, acutely:

'Nothing in the use of History has been more political than this particular kind of refusal to allow it to become a political weapon.'

The attitude of 'no-sidedness' he describes as 'middle-class to the core'.

Social England is changing profoundly and inevitably along with the rest of the world, and the teacher who lives amid such changes and is truly alive must be influenced by them and his teaching of History must show the marks of them. Indeed, it may justly be

claimed that he is false to his high function of uniting past and future through the present if they do not so influence him, however 'romantic' the past may be. His duty, next to honesty and alertness, is to possess himself of adequate knowledge. The Report on London schools seems to suggest that there are teachers who rely on the contents of a class-book for their teaching material. If that is so, it approaches the magnitude of a pedagogic crime. The teacher simply must read, and it would be well if he eschewed text-books except as sources for bare facts and read freely in the true historians. There is no excuse nowadays that History, as written, is invariably dull. His general reading, too, will provide abundance of suggestive material if once he has learnt to take the fully human standpoint and to see himself as an active participant in the human effort.

As he reads and lives, he will deepen and strengthen his notion of what History really is, and Method will loom less large in his view.

A short time ago the Oxford Union Society seriously debated the question: 'That the mere examination of the events of the past is no education'. The meaning of the motion is not quite clear. But if it means what it appears to mean, the whole argument of this book is in support of it. Perhaps the phrase 'the mere examination of the events of the past', is meant as a criticism of History as actually taught—even Oxford History! One might well tremble for the future of Oxford History if the phrase were seriously meant to describe what History is.

All this involves, as its supreme instrument, Imagination. As Mr. Gretton, with his usual acuteness, points out, this historical imagination has begun to operate strongly in the community at large. It is no longer a shy and delicate creature preferring the quiet calm of the historian's study, but has now come out into the world and walks in the market-place. The tide which has carried it out is *News*, that spread of general information and of general interest in affairs which is so characteristic of our age—the most genuinely democratic feature of it. The students who attend Tutorial Classes and the many thousands of others who are now becoming alive to History are not much concerned with the Romance of the Past. Their focus is the Reality of the Present, and they want to comprehend it by the exercise of their imaginations upon the material of its history. It would be tragic if the historians and the teachers of History should be the last to realize this. Especially must the primary school teacher understand that it is for a world linked together by a quick and ubiquitous service of News, a world where men have more material than ever before for following the course of events and the play of forces, that he is preparing Little Arthur. To quote once more the eminently quotable little book by Mr. Gretton:

‘The vivifying imagination which is necessary for all good historical work [may we insert also “teaching of History” ?] comes at the moment not from any temporary and external provocation of interest in national existence, nor from the direction of literary impulse, but from an influence that

must, in all probability, be permanent—a widely spread acquaintance with events and a widely spread intelligence about social conditions.’

It is, perhaps, the main concern of the teacher of History in the primary school to-day to understand this new spirit and to identify himself entirely with it. If he does so the History he teaches will acquire new and lively meaning. Moreover, he will realize that he is concerned with something much more weighty than the devising of ingenuities of Method wherewith to communicate a Matter given once for all in the Twelve Tables of the History-book. He may even come to believe that the commonplace present is not so commonplace after all, and that so far from being distinctly uninteresting for Little Arthur, it is the one thing for which he really cares and which he craves to understand.

## XII

### CONCLUSION

IT remains now to sum up very briefly the argument of the preceding pages, and, in doing so we shall return to the point from which we began and from which we have never departed for long, namely, the world in which Little Arthur must learn to live and have life more abundantly.

The gist of the whole argument may be expressed by saying that a changed conception of History and of the purpose of studying History has become powerful in the world at large, while the teaching of History in the schools remains largely unadjusted to the new situation. The essence of that conception should now be clear enough. It refuses to regard History as just a story and no more: it has little patience with sentimentalities, whether in the form of Romance of the Past or a merely passionate and uninstructed Patriotism; it is not prepared to regard the historian as a sort of soothsayer, and while it asks that History should be written with force and clearness, it is not easily bewitched by mere brilliance of style. Still less is it disposed to value much that passes for 'research', those 'tragical compilations' of which Dr. Barker speaks. Its standpoint is firmly taken in the present. It looks at the world around with all those aids to information and knowledge of things that modern apparatus of communication can provide, and it finds conflicts and disharmonies and anomalies with which it feels itself to be directly

concerned, and it asks 'How did these things come to be ? What is the past that is in them ?' Then it turns to the historian, no longer a showman or a seer, but just a competent investigator, and says: 'Tell us in plain and honest language what sort of growth lies behind these things.' Its purpose is directly and even severely practical ; it wants to be informed about past growth so that it may exercise some control over growth in the future. Hence a new Imagination that reaches before and after ; but rather than pine for what is not, it is eager to construct in order that it may fulfil. Imagination, as Mr. Gretton points out, has ceased to be a vagabond wandering aimlessly among unrealities, but has returned to the common market-place where she once laboured so fruitfully among the Greeks, and ordinary men are beginning once more to be curious about the roots of the common life. As General Smuts has so finely said, 'Humanity has struck its tents and is once more on the march'. The pillar of fire to guide its journeying is to be the beacon-light of a revitalized Imagination playing like a searchlight back upon the trail behind and forth upon the road ahead, and lighting up great and small, the humble things and the high things.

Only in the primary school, apparently, is Imagination to be a pretty vagabond, sent out to play among the fairies away from the coal-scuttles and policemen of the commonplace present.

The new conception of History and of the place of Imagination in regard to it has been immensely strengthened by the experiences of the Great War. But

it was at work long before. We should not be far wrong if we treated it as an outcome of the same process of social and intellectual change which gave rise to a British Labour Party and to a profound change in the outlook of British Liberalism. Scholars may have had something to do with the stimulation and guidance of it, and the provision of necessary material. But, in the main, it is a deep-seated popular movement springing from the very roots of a people in whom the historic sense has always been strong, though in periods of high stress or deep stagnation it might for a time lie dormant. Among dwellers in the country it has always been the rule of life, a philosophy which Maurice Hewlett has set to exquisite music in his 'Song of the Plow'. But for a century or so, a population uprooted from the ancient country and domiciled uneasily and precariously in the new and bewildering town, was unable to find itself. A survey of the manner of growth of the towns in the earlier nineteenth century shows how little the process was understood and how groping and futile were the early attempts at control. So for a century or more an exiled and shepherdless population was struggling to find a home and reconstruct its life in a different part of the same ancient soil. The process is still going on and the conflicts which it must engender are by no means ended. But it will be gravely misunderstood unless it is seen as a movement of Englishmen with minds working in the characteristic English way, sending out feelers and suckers into the soil of History to find sustenance and root-hold. If there is a sense of grievance at the back of it, of a feeling of



dispossession, of an English heritage that has somehow been lost and must be recovered, that is itself an outcome of History and must be recognized as such. The timorous and those who shrink from the thought of social change should be only too grateful that the advocates of change realize so clearly that History itself must provide both the instrument and the justification for it. Even they may then come to realize that History is justified of all her English children.

Such, then, in brief outline, is the present situation, the situation to which the teaching of Little Arthur's History has to adjust itself. Of course, we do not pretend that anything more than a bare beginning can be effected at the primary school stage. But that beginning is all-important. To stimulate Arthur's interest in the common structure of human life; to awaken in him the first intelligent questionings about the origin and meaning of its phenomena; to offer some little guidance in the pursuit of such questionings; to equip him with the first general framework for the construction of the answers; to fix the habit of seeing life under the dominion of Change; to develop in him a lively sense of the contribution of his own people to the common effort:—these are, surely, no small matters. They are the more important in view of the improved possibilities of further education that are now opening up for him in Central or Secondary School and Tutorial Class.

It may be objected by the purists that what we propose to teach him is not 'History', not the objective, scientific record of the past, or whatever else History may mean. But we need not quarrel about a name.

We have tried to sketch out a form of knowledge that Arthur must come to possess, or better, a mode of behaviour that he needs to acquire in his present world. It matters little what name is given to it. Indeed, as we have suggested, sometimes it will be Geography or Literature or even Arithmetic.

What matters far more than the name is the spirit in which the thing is handled. Unreality and convention are the enemies of sound teaching in the primary school to-day, the one shrinking sentimentally and childishly from the actuality of a commonplace present, the other smothering vital growth beneath a rigid imposition of syllabus and method. In this latter regard custom may still lie upon Little Arthur with a weight heavy as frost and deep almost as life. The ground of it is a history-book conception of History, of a record once delivered and to be communicated objectively by methodical instruction.

Really it is the notion of Humanity and of the common effort to which we must ever return. This little book is written during the course of a sea-voyage where quarters are rather close. It is written to the accompaniment of a surrounding music of humanity that can hardly be called still, and, except in bad weather, is seldom sad. The setting seems not unsuitable. For it is the life that is here represented that is the very stuff of History. It is to know why ships sail the seas and how they have sailed in the past, and to do his share in securing that they continue to be free to pass upon their lawful occasions that Arthur learns History. And it is with people just such as this crew

and these fellow-passengers that his History is concerned. Indeed, it would be tempting to develop the analogy between a whole ship's company and the single society whose nature Arthur must learn to understand. But we refrain. Plato has done the thing so much better!

The notion of Humanity has, in Arthur's day, come to expression in the form of a League of Nations. We have said little about the League in this book, and we intend to say little, not because the League is of little importance, but because it is of such enormous importance. So important is it, not so much for what it can actually do to-day, but for what it symbolizes and for what it promises, that the realization of its possibilities calls for something much more fundamental than the inclusion of some details about it in the regular History-syllabus. The whole spirit of our History teaching will have to be transformed, especially in the early stages, if the League is to become that supreme instrument for the common service that it might become. And we are rash enough to believe that it is along some such lines as those suggested in this book that the reform will have to proceed.

Here, again, it is significant that support of the League and the League idea is strongest among comparatively humble people, that is, among those who have, relatively, most to lose from mishandling of human affairs, and who, as we have seen, are beginning to exercise historic imagination in the search for some means of control. That fact alone makes it impossible that war should be any longer just the sport of the

great. But, of itself, it will not prevent war. The worst error that can be made by supporters of the League is that they should represent it mainly as a war-preventing machine. Wars are, to only a small extent, prevented by legal and deliberative machinery. The real guarantee against war and for the success of the League is to be found rather in an extension of the *range* and an intensifying of the *depth* of human co-operation. The beginnings of such a result and the ultimate security for it are to be found in a teaching of History which will determine the necessary outlook over the life of Humanity as a whole. The attempt to sketch in rough outline the early stages of such teaching is the business of this book.

Suspicion of the League and its possibilities rests largely on a fear that the strengthening of it may involve some surrender of national independence, and we are told that the real business of History teaching is to inculcate Patriotism. We agree, but we would urge that a blatant Nationalism is one thing, a genuine Patriotism quite another thing. It is no part of our purpose to discuss Nationalism, its virtues and its dangers. All we would suggest here is that what seems to be needed is the encouragement of a patriotism that looks inwards rather than outwards, to the dear and intimate things of the land and life of one's own people, rather than to the conflicts and jealousies and arrogances that may seem to fill the space between our own and other peoples. English war-poetry is a thing to be proud of in this respect. How much there is in it of just *England*, and of faith in her continuing possibilities for the

common good, and how little of the ugly note of envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness!

On our own principles, England and English life must form the centre and the main substance of Arthur's teaching. But it is the *setting* that is all-important. The whole national History must be seen in its place as one field of operation, one centre of functioning, for the common human effort.

To that effort Arthur's country has contributed much. Sometimes it has failed and has hindered. Where it has done so, Arthur must be frankly told. His patriotism will then become something like that of Wordsworth which can feel for its country like a mother for a child. How characteristic of Wordsworth is that reversal of the normal way of expressing the relationship where the country is the mother and the patriot the child! It is what we should expect from one who tells us that the child is father of the man.

It is in the spirit of that Wordsworthian reversal that the teaching of Little Arthur's History must inculcate patriotism. Then the much-abused 'My Country Right or Wrong' may come to have its proper meaning which should be 'My Country Most When She Is Wrong', for then she needs me most.

As to the means by which we are to judge the Right and the Wrong, the whole teaching of History will provide these, and that, perhaps, is all we need now say about it.

## A NOTE ON MATERIAL

THE following suggestions may be serviceable as a very rough guide to the teacher in selecting and organizing historical material.

1. *Main Ideas of Free-Government.*

Corporate responsibility. Representation. Respect for Law. Law and liberty. Limits of Law (persecution). Instruments of government. Free speech.

2. *Utilities.*

Transport. Trade. Domestic life. Warfare.

3. *Primitive Society.*

i.e. The main *sources* of Civilization and the distinctive contributions from each source.

4. *Economic Organization.*

Slavery. Serfdom. Gilds. Domestic industry. Open-field farming. Enclosures. Factories. Forms of capitalism. Changes in town-life.

5. *Religion.*

Institutional forms. Persecution. Reformation. Separation of Church and State.

6. *Modern Forces.*

Nationalism. Socialism. Colour. Imperialism. British Empire. League of Nations.

7. *Culture.*

Greece. Rome and Israel. Christianity. Monasteries. Universities. Books and Printing. Renaissance. Art and Science. National Education. Great writers. Artists and Thinkers.

There will be no attempt, of course, to take these topics directly as such. They are suggested rather as necessary structural elements in the 'world' that Arthur must come to form for himself. It is for the teacher to work them into the

texture of history courses and to determine the manner of treatment most suitable to his pupil.

A few similar suggestions may be offered for English History in particular.

1. The Elements of the Nation. Pre-Celtic. Celtic. Roman. Anglo-Saxon. Dane. Norman. Fleming.
2. The Forces of Fusion. Island. Christianity. Kings. Reaction on Neighbours.
3. Growth of Law and Freedom (1688-9).
4. Parliament and its powers.
5. King and Nobles. National unity.
6. Reformation as religious, social and economic change.
7. Looking overseas. The Tudors and Stuarts.
8. Empire, Old and New.
9. Industrial Revolution.
10. Contributions to Culture; Shakespeare, Newton, Turner, Darwin, &c. English Literature.

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